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ESSAYS IN ORTHODOXY



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TORONTO

# ESSAYS IN ORTHODOXY

BY

OLIVER CHASE QUICK

*Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury*

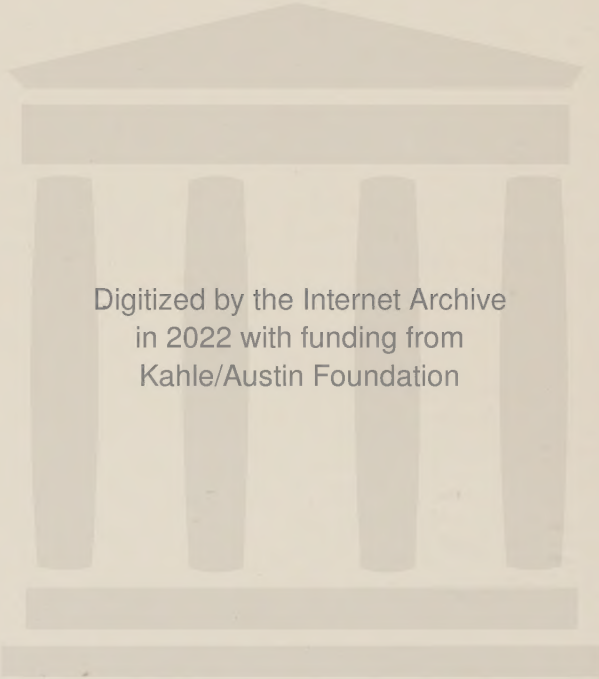
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ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1916

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“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”—*Jeremiah*, vi. 16.

“Old things need not be therefore true,”  
O brother men, nor yet the new ;  
Ah ! still awhile the old thought retain,  
And yet consider it again !—CLOUGH.



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I desire to acknowledge the courtesy of the Editor of the *Church Quarterly Review* in allowing me to reprint Chapter V, the bulk of which appeared in the *Church Quarterly Review* as an article under the title of "Self-Sacrifice and Individual Immortality." I am greatly indebted to various friends for most valuable criticisms and suggestions, and among them to the Rev. G. K. A. Bell, who also prepared the Table of Contents.



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# INTRODUCTION

## RESTATEMENT OR EXPLANATION ?

To say that the present is a time of change and upheaval, social, political and religious, is to state a truism so obvious as to invite ironic contradiction. The cataclysm through which we are passing is at once so vast in its dimensions and so profound in its penetration of individual life, that we may well shrink from looking to history for guidance in circumstances to which history itself affords no parallel. Yet it is no new thing for the established manners, customs and beliefs of men to be upset. In all such times of violent transition the same great problem of the reconciliation between old and new forces itself upon the judgement of mankind, and it should not be impossible to find in the

lesser crises of the past principles of thought and action which may help us to deal with the gigantic perplexities of to-day.

The religious aspect of these perplexities is our immediate concern. In regard to religion the European War only echoes and intensifies the profound disturbance of thought which had its origin in the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century. The fabric of Christian faith has during recent years been shaken to its foundations. Its intellectual and moral supports have alike been fiercely assailed by the logic both of speculation and of facts ; and it is still doubtful in what form the fabric will settle down, when the earthquake has at length subsided. The Christian contends that the central stronghold of Christ's revelation must stand unmoved ; yet in the general confusion it is hard to determine its boundaries, and it is small wonder if many decline to pin their trust to the permanent survival of any article of belief.

It is in circumstances such as these that the Christian's heritage of past experience, stored in the treasure-house of his Bible,

reveals its peculiar worth. The Old Testament is the record of a small people, small alike in numbers and in political importance. Yet the record endures, great with the trials, doubts and problems of universal humanity, and in it the central issues of man's religious life are thrown into clearer relief by the very simplicity of their setting. As we study its pages, the story of the chosen people presents one period above all when through one man's clearness of head and courage of heart the utter collapse of an established order of religion served only to reveal the permanence of the spiritual basis on which that order had rested.

Neither in life nor in death has Jeremiah ever been a popular prophet. The gloom of his warnings is too profound, the outpouring of his denunciation too monotonous. Yet his career marks the greatest crisis in the history of Hebrew religion, when the whole circle of beliefs and customs which centred round the holy city and temple was suddenly dissolved by the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of a heathen invader. Traditional faith could scarcely have sustained

a more staggering shock ; and for that reason those who can discern the signs of modern times may turn again to Jeremiah in a more sympathetic spirit, more able to receive light from the glory of the inspiration which shines through, while it accentuates, the sombre tragedy of his life.

The tragedy deepens, and its lesson is more plainly read, the more we realise of the man's character and of his message. In both respects Jeremiah presents a striking contrast to Isaiah, the greatest of his predecessors. The leading note of Isaiah's character is the confidence of assured faith. He was cast in so heroic a mould that hardly in his darkest hours does he make any claim upon our pity. Jeremiah is of a very different stamp. He was a man of acutely sensitive feelings, sensitive no less to the contempt and hostility of his fellows, than to the imperative claim of the inward call which brought their enmity upon him. " I am in derision daily—everyone mocketh me. As often as I speak, I cry out. I cry violence and spoil, because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me and a derision all the day long. And if I

say I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name, then there is in mine heart a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I weary myself to hold it in, but cannot."

" . . . Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed?" And to this most sensitive of men was entrusted a mission which might well have daunted the most callous. Isaiah's message at the crisis of his career was a popular message of confidence and good cheer. Sennacherib could not touch Jerusalem, the sanctuary of the Lord was inviolable. Jeremiah knew no such hope and no such triumph. The sin of Judah, as he came gradually to realise, had gone too deep to be atoned for except through the destruction of the Jewish State. The people had broken the covenant, and Jehovah could no longer outwardly fulfil His promise to preserve the throne of David in Jerusalem. Therefore during most of the Babylonian wars and invasions, Jeremiah was compelled to maintain the uselessness of resistance, and thereby to take what must have seemed an unpatriotic and almost traitorous course. There were those who still declared "The

Temple of the Lord is safe." Jeremiah had to tell them that even that faith was a delusion. Small wonder that he was harshly treated by the authorities, that during the siege he was thrown into a dungeon and came within an ace of dying there. It is easy to trace the constant struggles in his mind between religious faith, personal resentment, and no less passionate patriotism, as he swiftly turns from appeals for vengeance upon his own countrymen to pleadings for the preservation of Jerusalem.

But unquestionably the miracle of Jeremiah's life is the endurance to the end of his faith and hope in the God of Israel. That faith and hope wavered at times, but they never broke, right up to his death, among a handful of despised refugees in a foreign land, whither he had been taken in defiance of his wishes. If we ask the cause of the miracle, there can only be one answer. In the collapse of all that was outward and secondary, Jeremiah had been enabled to grasp more firmly than any of his predecessors the spiritual essence of the Hebrew religion. The more clearly it appeared that the Temple and city



were doomed, that the national independence of the Jewish State could not endure, the more clearly he perceived that the essence of religion lay in the writing of God's law on man's heart, in the knowledge of and communion with God in the soul. It was because he grasped the essentials so firmly that he was prepared, with terrible regret and at tremendous cost, to let the non-essentials go. When the old covenant seemed lost for ever, the Jewish nation destroyed, and he himself a friendless outcast, he could still look dimly forward to a time when God should make a new covenant with His people, and at the last write His law upon their hearts. "Then they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

Such was the man to whom we may well turn for guidance to-day. We are not called upon to go through all that he endured. We are spared at least that terrible conflict between religion and patriotism which was his sorest trial. We do not see our country

engaged in a warfare which we believe to be a terrible mistake, doomed to end in irretrievable disaster for us all. We are not asked to face alone the ridicule and persecution of our friends, while we utter protests and warnings which in their ears sound like treason. We may thank God that we are not called upon to pass such a test, nor even to speculate how we should act if we were. And yet this is a time of fiery trial for the faith of all of us. Much of what we fancied secure in the old comfortable days, just as the Jews trusted in the security of their city and Temple, is crumbling to pieces before our eyes. Have we that clear knowledge of the abiding essence of our faith, which will enable us to pluck a deeper penitence and a surer hope out of the ruin ?

The greatness of Jeremiah lies in the fact that he knew what might be given up, because he knew what must be kept and recovered.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An interesting work called "Faith or Fear ?" has recently made its appearance in connection with the National Mission. The assumption underlying the antithesis of the title is an instructive one. It is assumed that faith means simply the kind of trustfulness shown by Abraham, when he set forth not knowing whither he went, the willingness to cast bread upon the waters, in the hope that it will even-

“Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Surely it is a striking fact that Jeremiah of all prophets should have delivered that message. And yet the message is profoundly true to the history of religious reformations. No great religious revival has been really a new departure. Man has never made any great religious advance while turning his back upon the past. It was the people of Athens, we are told, who were always looking for some new thing, with the result that when the new thing came, they tually be recovered : this faith is opposed to the fear which declines to take such risks. The moral of the book is to teach that the Church of England will show faith by readiness to change and to venture all things, fear by clinging to her present institutions and manner of life. Herein the authors are preaching a much needed sermon. But the lesson needs correction by the complementary truth, that faith means not only trustfulness but also trustworthiness, and in trustworthiness the fear of betraying trust forms a very essential part. If we give to a friend a sum of money to hold in trust for our children, we do not praise the “faith” which invests it all in a gold-mine of dazzling promise and doubtful existence, but rather the “fear” which clings to the sober security of Consols. What if the Church of England be a trustee to whom God has committed for future generations a revelation of Himself ? May not some even of her institutions guarantee the safe-keeping of that trust ?

thought it only distinguished by its silliness. Great reformers of religion have always been first concerned to open men's eyes to what they have got already, to the faith handed down to them from the past, which they have ignored in their blindness or dishonoured through their self-will. The same lesson has been taught by all, by the Jewish prophets and psalmists with their harping on the past promises and performances of Jehovah, by the English Reformers with their appeal to Scripture and the early church, by the Oxford Movement with its endeavour to recover what was best in mediævalism, nay even surely by our Lord Himself with His terrible warning, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Modernism, when it really deserves its name, stands condemned by it at the very bar of history to which it so often appeals. For what moves the deepest soul of man is not what is modern but what is eternal, and what is eternal must always be learned in the past before it can be recognised in the present. Not for nothing does our Bible teach that human religion starts with the

attempt to recover something lost, and ends, not with the entry upon a wholly new life, but in the resurrection of an old one.

In a time of upheaval, when men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth, the first need of our people is not for a new faith nor even for a new system. The first need is that we should all re-discover what are the treasures hidden in the old faith and the old system, yes, even the old Anglicanism if you will, which we have been neglecting in the past and now too often notice only to deride. It is not that no change is needed—God knows it is—but we can only change aright, if we will first be patient enough and humble enough to appreciate what we already have.

That is the need and the difficulty. For some reason or other people do not find in the Church the old message of gospel hope which she exists to proclaim. The message for the souls of men is there, it is the life and meaning of all her creeds and sacraments and services. But, somehow, the living message has been hidden and stifled under the machinery which it should control. No

other message could meet our needs, very likely even with the machinery there is not so much wrong as we think—certainly it is not the oldest parts which most need to be replaced. Yet, somehow, the whole is not rightly used or understood. To many people the Church means nothing more than a dreary succession of observances which it is the parson's thankless task to exact from a reluctant or mystified congregation. The voice of the gospel has been choked with the arid dust of convention ; and men at the front are dying, men some of them taught in our schools, in utter ignorance of what the Church stands for, not knowing the use or the meaning of the faith and means of grace which God appointed to be their comfort and stay at the last. It is a terrible tragedy of misunderstanding.

To the clearing up of misconceptions, to the better appreciation of the old essentials of our faith, this book is offered as a very humble and very tentative contribution. The writer is convinced that misunderstandings of the Church, at any rate among educated people, concern not least the intellectual aspect of her



message. It is commonly said that less theology is what we need ; but those who counsel thus are surely guilty of a highly dangerous confusion between remedy and disease.<sup>1</sup> Most people, no doubt, prefer that religious teachers should appeal to the heart rather than to the head. They prefer being asked to feel to being made to think. But it does not follow that their preference should be encouraged. As a nation we welcome what we call "the gospel," we dislike theology, and we detest dogma. But the fact that we attach too much importance to feeling, too little to thought, and almost none to authority, is really no ground for supposing that we cannot or ought not to effect any change in our scale of values. As a

<sup>1</sup> The confusion is well illustrated by such a passage as this from Mr. B. H. Streeter's *Restatement and Reunion* (p. 2):—"In the present age it is especially necessary to emphasise more strongly than ever that the centre of gravity of Christianity does not lie in theology. For, whether we may regret it or not, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the traditional Christian theology has lost the prestige which it enjoyed in earlier ages . . . ." It does not occur to Mr. Streeter to ask whether that prestige cannot and should not be restored. This fact somewhat discounts the value of his protest (Ch. II) that the tastes of "Jones" are not a determining influence in his presentation of Christian truth.

matter of fact, the unpopularity of theology and dogma springs far more from a misconception of their purpose than from any tenable objection to their use.

Mediævalism had exaggerated that element in faith, which consists of an intellectual assent to certain propositions. Then the chief duty of every Christian was to declare that he believed certain things to be as the Church stated them—all other duties took a secondary place. Evidently the settling of what are the things to which a Christian ought to give an intellectual assent, is the sphere of theology; and theology must be the work of the intellectual expert; its results must by the ordinary man be taken more or less on trust. Mediævalism therefore in exaggerating the value of intellectual assent, exaggerated also the importance of theology and dogma in relation to other elements in the Church's system.

Since the Middle Ages a progressive reaction has taken place in the Reformed Christianity of Europe. Not intellectual assent, but what is known—with disastrous vagueness—as religious experience, has been increasingly represented as the Christian's primary concern. In

practice this has meant that religious feelings have been cultivated, while thought about the realities which are their origin and object has been very generally neglected or even disparaged. In part, this is the inevitable result of the impulse which the Reformation gave to individualism and democracy ; for every man is capable of religious feelings, while only the few are capable of thinking out for themselves their implications and their source.

Another influence which has operated powerfully in the same direction is the ever increasing rush and bustle of life brought about by ever greater facilities of communication. Trains and steamers, telegraphs and telephones, the cheap and rapid postal service, though they are often spoken of as conveniences and even as luxuries, are rapidly becoming the rigorous task-masters of civilised man. They have increased to an extent hard to exaggerate the amount of work which the ordinary man of affairs is able simultaneously to manipulate. It is not merely that they have indirectly lengthened the actual hours of work through the greater

intensity of competition which they have produced, but also that they have immeasurably multiplied the number of those practical problems and undertakings connected with his business or profession, to which a man finds himself obliged to devote the powers of his mind. The speed with which each piece of business can be settled enables more pieces of business to be got through, but it by no means lessens the mental strain which each entails. A man's brain is therefore increasingly used up by the affairs of his calling. He has less and less spare energy to devote to the cultivation of leisure. Hence the general demand of the laity is for a religion specially adapted to tired minds. And the clergy themselves are the victims of similar circumstances. The ordained ministry, as a profession, is habitually understaffed. The most vigorous minds in it are usually employed in urban work, and the wonderful ease of communication which our towns afford makes it ever more nearly impossible for them to escape the pressing calls of practical work, to which they struggle to respond. Few of them have time for any quiet study and reflection beyond the minimum

which suffices for the due fulfilment of a weekly programme of sermons and addresses. In result, the old-fashioned intellectual *θεωρία*, the habit of calm and steady reflection upon the ultimate problems of life as a whole, is becoming more and more of a lost art, the very faculty for which is being atrophied through disuse. The increasing volume of religious literature which pours from the press only serves, as a rule, to emphasise the absence of this attitude of mind. The bulk of it consists of short books, written more or less obviously under pressure, to serve some immediate purpose of edification, controversy, or compromise. The one note generally lacking is the *theoretic* interest in ultimate realities, which can only live in an atmosphere of leisure—that word which to-day connotes either the opportunity for self-indulgence or the periodic inaction necessitated by habitual over-work.

But, whatever be the cause, the fact is indisputable that, at least within the Reformed Communion, religious feelings have been dwelt on and encouraged, to the neglect of theological thought. Men have been bidden

more and more to feel the attraction of Christ's character, and to worship solely with a view to the sensible piety which church services may evoke, while questions as to whether Christ is God, what His Deity means, whether His teaching is the truth, whether that truth will judge us at the last day, whether in the Sacrament we indeed come into His living Presence, have been more and more thrust aside. It is true that certain theological doctrines, chiefly those connected with the Eucharist, play a prominent part in controversy between opposed ecclesiastical parties. But even they have been used rather as the standard for a "movement" than as an opportunity for reverent and searching study. Partisans of all sides, "catholic," liberal, and evangelical, have found it easier to brandish flags, to vociferate battle-cries, and to plunge themselves in the business of propaganda, than to think out in their broad theoretic relations the principles which they are so eager to spread. Doctrines are commended and rejected mainly because they seem to lie in the path of some general movement either towards "the restoration of our Catholic

heritage" or towards "freedom from the tyranny of dogma," or any other catchphrase which will obviate the need for discussing the truth and value of the particular doctrine on its own merits. But, in any case, theological doctrines in their relation to life as a whole play a very small part in modern disputations, which are almost exclusively occupied with some immediate problem of ecclesiastical practice or historical criticism. To broaden the basis of discussion, to raise prior and more universal issues would be, it is felt, to enter upon abstract questions which are altogether "above the plain man's head," and are presumably therefore not worth the consideration of those who are called upon to instruct him.

What has been the result? Certainly not that the ultimate questions of the universe have been wholly ignored, but that they have been handled more and more exclusively by a narrow circle of specialists, who are outside all official connection with the Church. Science and philosophy have been boiling over with discovery and theory, but the experts in these subjects betray a very



natural ignorance of the stand-point and teaching of Christian theology, an ignorance which unfits them for estimating the full bearing of the new knowledge upon the deepest issues of human life. Meanwhile the Reformed Church has been content to regard their conclusions as outside her sphere, until from time to time her leaders have been driven by the growing menace to approve or acquiesce in some *modus vivendi*, which has merely deferred the consideration of the real issues at stake. The theological tradition has been lost, and nowadays when those who should be theologians try to effect some more lasting reconciliation between religion and "modern thought," they too often suggest merely some "restatement" of a rather reduced faith, in which liberal concessions to the destructive critic are carefully balanced by appeals to the trustworthiness of "religious experience." Of what religious experience is, what it means, what is the criterion of its truth, or how its conflicts are to be reconciled, they tell us almost nothing.

Surely we are on wrong lines. Very probably modern knowledge must compel us to abandon,



not without regret, beliefs which were dear to the forefathers of our faith. But before we allow ourselves to part with any legacy which they have bequeathed to us, we must make sure that we appreciate the full value of our heritage. And if we would do so, we must restore to living activity the theological and dogmatic tradition of the Catholic Church. We must make it plain that even in modern language the Church has something very definite and authoritative to say about God, the world, sin, judgement, heaven and hell. In other words, representatives of the old Church must do more genuine thinking on their own account, they must not be content with unconvincing mitigations of external criticism, or ill-considered acceptance of external aid.

How do the old theological doctrines of Christianity really appear in the light of the work done by modern psychologists and philosophers such as James, MacDougall, Bradley, Bosanquet, Ward, Bergson, to mention a few names at random? What re-interpretations of old religious truths do the theories of such modern thinkers suggest?

The psychologists and philosophers for the most part do not themselves claim to be expert theologians; they are quite out of touch with the theological tradition of orthodoxy, and such religious conclusions as they do suggest are naturally not often sympathetic to what they regard simply as official doctrines embalmed in the conservative instincts of ecclesiasticism, long after the vital significance has left their antiquated frame. And instead of accepting the challenge and entering upon a field of study as fascinating as it is important, the Church suffers the world to decide the case against her simply by default. The timorous theology of to-day is more and more losing touch with the enquiries which should provide the most important material for its research. Few exponents of orthodoxy are sufficiently proficient either in old theology or in modern science and philosophy seriously to undertake the task of reconciliation; and educated opinion is driven to assume that the best modern thought must necessarily discard, or at least alter out of all recognition, the old doctrines which used to represent the intellectual aspect of the Christian faith. True,

the Church exists primarily for the benefit of "the plain man." But it is a foolish and pernicious falsehood to say that theology does not concern him. He may not have time to enter into all the details of its data and argument—he has his own not less important work to do—but he is intensely interested in its broad conclusions and quite able to appreciate, if they are simply stated, the main steps of the process by which those conclusions are verified. He will moreover be quite willing to accept the statement of them, if he can be assured that it is the fruit of really comprehensive and sincere reflection on God's manifold revelation of Himself. What we need is not less theology, but a very great deal more.

It is then an imperative duty to keep alive the theological tradition, not hastily to hide or throw away old doctrines at the first demand of those who have never had occasion to study their real import, but to let them renew their youth in the fresh interpretations which fuller knowledge brings. And to fulfil this task we must first go back to the old theology of our creeds, that we may disentangle its

essential meaning. We must try to clear away the rust which our neglect has suffered to collect upon it, that it may once more shine in use. We need not, we must not, reaffirm every word that the fathers of the Church thought to be true, still less must we adopt all their methods of enforcing it. But we must remember that though their language is not ours, at least it was for them, and it may be for us, the vehicle of an eternal revelation of the ultimate constitution and ordering of the universe. For them theology was not primarily the result of any reflection upon their own experience. It was the revelation of God which created both their experience and their theology, and the theology was designed quite as much to guide experience as to interpret it. For them intellect was not a tin-kettle tied to the tail of feelings, urging them to wilder extravagance as it clattered helplessly in their wake. Rather they thought of intellect as a divinely inspired faculty of vision, whereby they were able to see the goal, and point out the direction, of that long and arduous journey which human experience has still to tread. They held it a sacred trust to

guide in the light of that vision the steps of the people whose souls, as they believed, had been committed to their charge. The better part for us is not to set their authority at naught, but to sit at their feet till we have learned the lesson, that some things in their teaching which must be removed are shaken, only that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. The first necessity is not to restate the creeds, but to explain them. Perhaps after the explanation, the need for restatement will not seem so pressing.

The writer is much more than aware that after such an exordium the remainder of his book will only seem to illustrate the proverb, *parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*. He will, however, be much more than content, if only the exordium will inspire some better qualified exponents to take in hand a task which he has not attempted to perform. A few rather commonplace remarks on isolated points is all that he himself is able to offer. Yet they issue from the unashamed conviction that the task is worth performing. There is an effective allegory in Mr. G. K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*, where he pictures a

storm-tossed explorer coming to an unknown shore in all the excited anticipation of a new discovery, only to find himself landing in his native country from which he set forth. Europe has lost her spiritual bearings. She has tired of a Christianity she has never tried. Perhaps if we succeed in keeping the old gospel, the old theology, the old creeds and sacraments above water, she will be driven by the very fury of the tempest to re-discover them. Once again shall tribulation work patience, and patience experience, and experience return to the old, everlasting hope.

## PREFATORY NOTE

IN fairness to the reader it is well to state at the outset the limitations of the task which we are undertaking. Apologetic is not our primary aim. Our purpose is not to prove nor even to estimate the evidence for the Christian faith ; rather it is to reach a clearer conception of its meaning and application to life. We are trying, not to defend against attack, but to elucidate in face of misunderstanding. In order to achieve this purpose it will be necessary to show that the affirmations of the Christian faith may be true, but not that they must be true, or even, except indirectly, that they are more probably true than not.

An illustration may serve to define the scope of our discussion. If it be proved that the conditions obtaining on Mars are such that life cannot maintain itself there, we can no longer retain any clear conception of living

creatures supposed to exist on Mars. Our imagination indeed may still, in a sense, people the planet, diverting novels may still be written on the assumption that Mars is inhabited; but if we recognise that those inhabitants cannot be more than mere creatures of our fancy, we can no longer think of them at all as really existing on Mars, for in order to do so we should have to delude ourselves, so that they might appear to us to be more than merely fanciful. If on the other hand the evidence as to the habitability of Mars is simply inconclusive, even though the balance of probability be on the negative side, we may still think of Martian creatures as real, and attach a definite meaning to our description of them. If, therefore, a real meaning is to be attached to the Christian faith, it must be shown that it may be true, not necessarily that it is true. Our discussions therefore will trench upon the sphere of apologetics, but only to the extent of showing the failure of attempts to prove that our faith is false.

Nevertheless this task is by no means so trivial as our illustration would seem to



indicate. For if we show that the Christian faith may be true, we have already gone much further towards establishing its truth, than we should go towards establishing the existence of life on Mars, merely by showing its possibility. For in the case of Martian inhabitants we can be content to suspend our judgement. The question does not very vitally concern the man in the street. The answer to it, whatever it be, need not make any difference to the thoughts and actions of his daily life. Far otherwise is it with the affirmations of the Christian faith. If God exists as an Almighty and all-loving Creator and Father, then that fact has an immediate bearing upon every careless moment which a man spends or wastes. He cannot afford to suspend his judgement, nay, he cannot really suspend his judgement at all, for every moment he must think and act either as though the Christian faith were true, or as though it were false. The question about the existence of the Christian God is vitally and continually relevant, the question about the existence of Mr. Wells's Martians is not. But we must observe that this vital relevance of God's existence depends

upon our attributing to that existence a definite character and meaning. The existence of an Epicurean god, who does not interfere with the world, or of a Hegelian absolute, which cannot, is hardly more relevant to common life than the existence of a Martian. This consideration is of the first importance and has too often been ignored. Christian apologists have laid too much stress on "proofs" of God's existence which leave His nature and character vague. They have forgotten that if the Christian conception of God's character can be made clear and credible, then the practical facts of life will inevitably force a decision as to its truth ; and it is really not obscure which way the sinner who feels his need, and the saint who strives after goodness, will in the long run decide. It is much more important to show that the Christian God may exist and what His existence means, than to show that some God does exist, while the meaning of that existence is still shrouded in obscurity.

There is much truth in Tolstoy's contention, that for a man to argue about the existence of the Christian God is as though a drowning

man should argue about the strength of a rope which is flung to him. The drowning man sees what appears to be a rope, recognises the chance of safety which it offers, and snatches it, content to let the issue settle whether it is strong enough to bear his weight. Similarly any human soul, which understands its own distress, if it apprehends the meaning of the gospel, will seize hold on it, content to let the issue settle whether it is true. Our task is to show that the Christian faith offers to man's soul what may prove to be a rope of salvation. Perhaps the first task even of an apologetic writer should be rather to prove to man that he is drowning, than to prove that the rope must be strong enough to save him. A man can and will settle this latter point for himself. Possibly all that theory of any kind can ever do towards establishing the Christian faith is to make clear its meaning and its relevance; its verification must be left to experience.



# ESSAYS IN ORTHODOXY

## CHAPTER I

### GOD THE FATHER AND CREATOR

OUR Creed begins by bidding us think of God as our Father and Creator. Most people, if questioned on the subject, would probably agree that this is the natural point from which to start. The most fundamental belief in religion, that on which all others are based, is the acceptance of the proposition that our lives proceed and are derived from some great Principle of Good which is the supreme cause of the world, a principle so much vaster and higher than all that is merely human, that we are compelled, even without any very definite idea of what we mean by the word, to give to It, or rather to Him, the name of God.

The general question of God's existence,

as we have already suggested, is an unprofitable one to raise. After all, religion is a fact, whatever value we attach to it, and even our wildest illusions have some source in the reality from which all our impressions are derived. The real problem concerns the nature and character which we are to attribute to the Divine Being.

And it is just here that we find ourselves confronted at the very outset by the most threatening and far-reaching of all obstacles to religious thought. What do we mean by saying that we believe in a God who made us and all the world? We know what ordinary people in the old uncritical days meant, or thought they meant, by such a statement of belief. They thought of God the Father, or rather they imagined Him, as a man, infinitely greater and better than any human being their eyes could behold, yet as one who made the world in somewhat the same way as a man makes his tools or his works of art, and who controls and governs it, more or less as a sovereign controls and governs his people. The old pictures of the Trinity, in which the Father appears in the guise of a venerable old

man, are witnesses to the simple picturesqueness of the ancient faith.

And to-day we have outgrown it. We have outgrown it, because the growth of man's knowledge has so vastly enlarged the world in which he lives, that in it man himself seems now to occupy an infinitesimally tiny place. The horizons of space and the vistas of time, which man's science has opened out before him, have so dazed and bewildered his vision, that he seems to himself no more than a wandering atom loosed in a wilderness full of strange and alien shapes which merge into the shadows of an illimitable unknown. To change the metaphor, the straining meshes of man's mind can no longer be stretched to enclose the fresh shoals of experiences and ideas which are forcing their way in by every opening. The net of man's thought is breaking by the very weight of its own draught. How can he dare to attribute at all his own puny methods and characteristics to One of Whom he is to think as the origin and controller of the multifarious infinitude of things? It is from this fundamental doubt that all the objections urged in the name of science and philosophy

to the Christian faith in God the Creator really derive their power and their sting. Man may utter the name of God his Maker with his lips, but the grip of conviction has lost its hold upon his heart. The meaning of the words is lost in a fog of half-formed perplexities, and the mind feels itself adrift at the mercy of every shifting wind of new-fangled doctrine or specious prophecy. Such is the disease from which spring the very various symptoms of the religious bewilderment of our modern world. Some in their half-unconscious despair are tempted towards the spiritual suicide of agnosticism, while others steep themselves in the hardly less fatal narcotic of sentimental emotion, which the more degraded forms of modern religion are only too ready to provide.

Now, if our discussion is to follow the lines we have marked out for it, it is obvious that not much can be achieved in a chapter which takes for its subject only the First Person of the Trinity. Part of the meaning of the Christian doctrine of God is derived from the fact that it is a close-knit and indivisible whole. The Persons of the Trinity are one and inseparable, and it is the self-revelation of the



Father through the Son, witnessed to and interpreted by the Spirit, which gives us our knowledge of the nature and character of God. To endeavour, therefore, to formulate our ideas about God the Father apart from what we believe about the Son and the Spirit, must be to consider Him apart from the help He has Himself given us for that very purpose. This is a difficulty which confronts all exponents of the Christian faith. It is often met by considering, under the title of "God the Father," the general arguments for the existence of God, as distinct from His revealed character. In doing so we are supposed to arrive at the conclusions of "natural" as distinct from "revealed" religion, and to find in them some sort of general proof of God's existence. This course, however, as we have already suggested, is unsatisfactory and apt to be misleading. It tends to give the impression that the Creator is a rather vague and shadowy Being, concerning Whom not much can be known beyond the fact that He does, at least very probably, exist. Thus the meaning of the Christian doctrine of Creation, which depends on the character attributed to

God by Christian faith, is not really discussed or explained at all. The method we have sketched for ourselves will lead us along a rather different line. We shall frankly abandon the attempt to prove anything. We shall ask instead the question, How, in the present state of human knowledge, can we give to the idea of a Divine Creator its fullest possible significance? It is obvious that if the idea is to have any real significance at all, we must conceive the creative work of God by the help of human analogies. Our preliminary task therefore will be to determine in what sense such analogies may still hold good, and even gain a deeper meaning from the criticisms which, as we have seen, threaten to destroy their value altogether.

The old human analogies cannot be maintained in quite the same naïf way as once they were. We cannot go back to the anthropomorphism which found it possible to depict God the Father as a man with a grey beard. Yet we may notice at the very outset that the very incompleteness of all human analogies to God may teach a profoundly spiritual lesson, a lesson which the most religious minds

of every age have learned for themselves, but which the wider horizons of modern knowledge enable us to enforce with clearer authority. *Humanity and its world must depend in the last resort on some Being other and infinitely higher than themselves.* The moment the importance of this truth emerges, we can begin to trace a possible value in the very bewilderment which, as we saw, the growth of scientific knowledge has produced. That growth has made man doubt whether God can be conceived at all in human terms. At least then it is possible that modern thought may ally itself with old religion to teach mankind a new lesson of humility. If the universe is too great for the categories of merely human thinking to interpret, then we may with the greater reason maintain that the source of it is infinitely more than human, a Being before Whom man does well to abase himself in the dust.

But if that be so, the danger we have to guard against is not merely, nor even perhaps chiefly, excessive adherence to human analogies which represent God in terms of human nature. We must also beware of seeking to

confine Him within the limits of any human experience or thought. One curious effect of the fundamental perplexities about the universe, to which modern discoveries have given rise, has been to turn man's thought, as it were, back upon itself, so that it refuses to believe in any reality which cannot be represented simply as an object of man's own experience or consciousness. Many of our most advanced teachers in recent years have sought to define the nature of the Deity as a phase of human experience, a form of human consciousness (sometimes termed "cosmic" consciousness), or as the most sublime object of human knowledge. Such theories sound strangely on the lips of those who assail the anthropomorphism of an older faith. For obviously we bring down God to our own level far more surely and disastrously, if we think of Him as a mere form or object of our own consciousness, than if we think of Him as though He were another man, of like passions with ourselves. A God Whom we are really to worship as the Creator of the World must be infinitely beyond and above the capacities of our experience. "Such knowledge is too

wonderful and excellent for me : I cannot attain unto it." " As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts, saith the Lord." The impassioned faith of the Old Testament may join hands with the agnosticism derived from modern science against doctrines which seek to comprehend God's nature within man's conscious experience, however highly developed and perfected. Anthropomorphic the language of the Bible at times may be, but at least it provides no support for delusive sophistries which aim at retaining the forms of religious language, while its essential meaning, the dependence of man upon Another Being, is disregarded.

True faith does not really differ from the most rigid agnosticism in declaring that God's nature is above human powers of apprehension ; it parts company with "doubt" only in maintaining that we can know enough to make it our duty to find out more, and that the effort so spent is abundantly worth while. The believer and the agnostic are like two travellers making their way along the same

difficult track. Both agree that the light is insufficient, but one says it will get better further on, and meanwhile there is at least enough for the next step. The other throws himself down by the road-side, declaring that further progress is impossible. Doubt only becomes a real enemy to faith, when it tends to pass into the paralysing certainty that there is nothing more to be known, and that further effort would be wasted. The proper function of doubt is to be the servant of faith, a servant which keeps its master humble by pointing to the need for further enquiry and endeavour.<sup>1</sup> If this is the kind of doubt which modern thought stimulates, its effect cannot be other than helpful to the true cause of religion.

Human analogies, therefore, can never provide anything like an adequate conception of God's nature; for it transcends all human knowing. But it does not at all follow that they are valueless, nor that their value is confined to the lessons to be derived from their failure. There is a wide difference, the importance of which is sometimes ignored,

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless servants of this kind are very trying; but it is precisely a *trying* servant that faith needs.

between a false illustration and an illustration which is merely incomplete. A very imperfect comparison is not the same thing as a wrong one. Suppose I have been listening to a magnificent symphony played by a great orchestra, and desire to give some idea of it to a friend. I may whistle or hum a piece of the melody, which, let us say, is the first violin's part, and, if I am a clever musician, I may similarly render bits of the parts played by other instruments. My attempt will be hopelessly inadequate, (1) because I cannot reproduce the tone of the instruments, (2) because I can only reproduce the part of one instrument at a time, whereas the whole effect of the symphony depends on the way in which the different parts are combined. But still my efforts, however ridiculously imperfect, may nevertheless be right as far as they go, and they may serve a useful purpose in enabling my friend to recognise the symphony when he hears it.

May not our human picturings of the creative work of God have a value of a somewhat similar kind? We must not expect them to be anything more than hopelessly inade-



quate. Each aspect and each aim of God's creative work will be infinitely greater than anything we can approach. Moreover, each of our limited ideas can only represent in isolation one tiny fraction of the Divine activity which combines all into a whole. But once the principle is grasped that an infinite degree of imperfection in representation does not necessarily imply falsehood, it follows that our human similes may nevertheless be not wholly devoid of usefulness and of truth. The spirit of true scepticism is a spirit of humble enquiry, very different from the petulant pride of childhood which refuses to make any effort the moment it finds complete success to be beyond its reach.

Before, however, we try from a few such analogies to reach some idea of what our creed bids us believe as to the creative work of God, it will be well to dispose of two general objections, which, if they could be upheld, would render our task superfluous :—

(1) It may be urged that human analogies to the Divine creation miss the whole point of the difficulty. Human creation is not in the real sense creation at all. At most it is a



modification of material already existing ; it is all work done on something already created. But the central difficulty of conceiving a Maker of the whole world lies in the fact that the whole must by force of definition, if created at all, be created out of nothing. To such creation, human creative efforts can form no analogy whatever.

The effectiveness of this challenge has often been exaggerated. Are we to say that human acts of creation are in no sense at all acts of creation out of nothing ? Is there nothing in what man creates which was not there before man created it ? Is there nothing genuinely original and new in the discovery of a fresh invention for our use, or in the work of art which holds us spell-bound by its glorious surprise ? Is the growth of a personality itself merely an unfolding and unrolling of qualities and characteristics which already belonged to it from the beginning of time ? Is there no element of real novelty in the sudden or gradual change and development of character which we so often witness and in our measure assist ? If in truth there is nothing new under the sun, then indeed, so far as our human

analogies go, creation remains a meaningless phrase, and so far we have found no help in conceiving the creative activity of God. But we are hereby taking up a philosophic position which is, to say the least, highly disputable and, *prima facie*, is in contradiction with the facts of experience. Clearly, the burden of proof lies with those who defend such a paradoxical doctrine.

On the other hand, if we admit the possibility of real novelty in things and of real origination in our personalities, then creation out of nothing is in principle admitted as conceivable in the only sense which our analogies demand. All we need mean by God's creation of the world is that the world took its real and ultimate origin from a creative act of God. And if our own acts are in their degree really originaive and their results really new, then it is by analogy quite conceivable that the whole world, as we know it, arose as a new creation from the originating act of a Divine Being.

(2) A second objection is more widely felt to be serious. It is urged that natural science is on the way to provide us with an alternative

explanation of the world which, when it is completed, will make any belief in a Divine Creator impossible. It is true that natural science has hitherto left many problems unsolved, the origin of life among them, but still with the help of metaphysical theories, materialistic or vitalistic, which take it for their guide, it is progressing towards their solution, and it is, to say the least, dangerous to base the doctrine of a Divine Creator on a temporary failure of science which may at any moment disappear.

The answer to this second objection involves considerations which are of considerable importance to our subject.

The problem of creation can be put in two ways. Concerning the creation of anything there are two distinct questions which may be asked. I may ask, *How* was it made? or I may ask, *Why* was it made? Let us apply these two questions to a common object of human construction, let us say a piano. I may discover how the different parts of a piano were fitted together, and what each was made of, so that I can understand the whole process of piano-making; and yet I may be quite

unable to give an explanation of why the process should have taken place. On the other hand I may be quite ignorant of how pianos are constructed, and yet know quite well the reason why they are made. For the answer to this question why? depends not on the method of manufacture, but simply on the purpose which the piano is intended to fulfil. The answer to each of the two questions tells us something about the origin of the piano, but it is the answer to the question why? alone which really *explains* its existence, and this explanation is found not in the study of the mere origin, but in the knowledge of the end which the piano is meant to achieve when it is complete.

These two questions retain, at least in some degree, their distinctness, when they are asked concerning the creation of the world. They represent roughly the different enquiries of natural science and of religion. Science is occupied with the study of how the world came to reach its present form. It carries back its search to the tiniest electrons which constitute matter, the faintest movement of the amoeba in which the mighty river of life first

trickled forth ; and it tries to grasp and reconstruct the whole process by which our world has grown out of these infinitesimal beginnings. But as to the why and wherefore of all this, science can directly tell us nothing. In so far as it remains science, it has never even asked the question. Even if science could reproduce the whole world as we know it, the question why it was originally produced would still remain unanswered. And, therefore, a scientific *explanation* of the world is, in the strict sense, impossible. The efforts made from the scientific point of view to dispute the belief of religion in a Divine Creator, too often resemble an attempt to prove that music is unreal, on the ground that nothing is learned about it by taking a piano to pieces. Religious faith, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the question why the world was created. True, the answer to the question how ? is by no means a matter of indifference to it. The more science discovers, the more light it throws on the methods of the Creator's work, and this light must be welcomed and used to the full. But such knowledge, interesting and important as it is, cannot itself

supply any answer to the really vital and universal questions which confront every man coming into the world. After all, however I and the world around me came to be here, here, in fact, we are, and I cannot be called altogether unreasonable if I maintain that the nature of the methods by which this result was reached does not in itself very vitally concern me. The question which does and must most vitally concern me, is the question, What am I here for? What, being here, am I meant to do? Now, the answer to this question of the purpose of my being and that of the world must obviously involve some view as to origin, more ultimate than any which science can possibly reach. For, as in the case of the piano, ultimate purpose alone can explain ultimate origin. To say there is no answer to this fundamental question of purpose, is to assume a position of dogmatic agnosticism, and to leave the world wholly unexplained. But knowledge of purpose does not necessarily involve knowledge of the method of origin or creation. The question of method assumes a position of subordinate importance, and can be left for solution to the

gradual results of progressive investigation. St. Augustine formulated the real essence of Christian faith in the Creator when he said "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." It is because we believe that we are made for God that we assert that God made us, and this faith need not be seriously impaired by a confession of far-reaching ignorance as to the method and manner of creation which God employed.

The human analogies, therefore, by which we try to reach a clearer faith in God's creative work, are mainly important, in so far as they suggest to us the purpose for which we and the world exist, and show the dependence of that purpose upon an origin from God Himself. The help they give us in conceiving the manner of God's creating activity may be real, but it is of subordinate importance. In this respect their task is to accept the data which the scientific study of the world provides, and to show how these data may be compatible with the fundamental truths, that the world proceeds from God, and is meant to fulfil His purposes. Here, then, their suggestions will

be entirely tentative and always subject to fresh revision in accordance with the fresh knowledge which scientific enquiry brings to light. The account of creation given in the first chapters of Genesis, if taken as an account of God's methods, is entirely primitive and largely misleading. Science has now taught us differently. But the religious truth and inspiration of Genesis is not at all thereby affected. Its permanent value lies in the assertion that the whole created world took its origin from the divine purpose of a righteous God, which it is one day destined to fulfil.

Having thus sketched the function, possible usefulness, and inevitable limitations of human analogies to the Divine creation, let us consider three simple illustrations, and endeavour to draw therefrom a clearer idea of what the creed means when it tells us to believe in God the Father as Maker of the World.

(1) One of the commonest illustrations current in the last century was that of the watchmaker and the watch. The real value of this analogy from the human craftsman lies in the suggestion that God's creatures are in a true sense his instruments and tools designed



and constructed to serve a purpose outside themselves. Man is distinguished from the rest of the animal creation by the fact that he is not entirely dependent for achieving the purposes of his life upon the mere adaptation of his own bodily form. He fashions vessels even to eat and to drink with, trains, ships and aeroplanes to facilitate his locomotion, telephones and books to assist his powers of speech and hearing. It has been suggested by M. Bergson that the phrase *homo faber*, rather than the old *homo sapiens*, best expresses man's real claim to superiority over the ape. And faith, noticing the wonderful order in which our world is constituted, and the complicated adjustments which that order involves, has always found part of its explanation in attributing a similar activity of craftsmanship to the Divine Creator. The most deeply religious of human minds have found at once their humility and their pride in the thought that they are instruments and vessels fashioned and adapted by God for the working out of purposes infinitely wider and more far-reaching than can be accomplished even by their own perfection. As man uses that which he makes,

so he believes that he and the world are made to be used. A classic expression of this whole idea is to be found in Browning's poem, *Rabbi ben Ezra*.

It is, however, a matter for regret that in the course of controversy the illustration of the watchmaker and the watch should have been raised to a position of exaggerated importance. The imperfections of the simile, when taken by itself as an account of creation, are obvious, and the superficial appearance which the watch possesses of going by itself when wound up, rendered it peculiarly liable to mislead.

(a) A watch, like other complex pieces of mechanism, is liable to be rendered quite useless by the omission of one tiny constituent part. If one little wheel is omitted, the watch will not go at all. And a watch which will not go is like salt that has lost its savour. It is fit for nothing, and can convey no kind of significant idea to any mind not familiar with working watches.

Hence, those who used this type of simile to interpret God's work of creation naturally thought of the world as complete from the

very first moment when, as it were, it started going. But science then discovered what we have learned to call the principle of evolution. We have been taught that the world is the result of a very gradual process of making which is still going on, and is still far from anything which can be called completion. Hence the inadequacy of the simile of the watch became apparent, and the minds of many, instead of recognising its imperfection and trying to help it out with others of a different kind, were driven into the error of supposing that all such analogies must be utterly false.

(b) An examination of a mere piece of mechanism reveals nothing of the character of him who made it, beyond the inference that he possessed a certain technical skill. Hence an excessive reliance on this type of simile led people to think of God as a Being too wholly external to His creation, not as really revealed and immanent within it. Hence they were led to the form of belief known as deism. For deism God is a Creator entirely outside the world, who operates upon it only in the form of occasional interferences,

more or less analogous to the repairs with which the watchmaker occasionally readjusts the working of the watch. Much confusion arose from the identification of these interferences with miracles, which were supposed to be the only form of God's operation upon the world.

(2) The work of the craftsman is, however, by no means the only form which human creative activity may take. The work of the artist is to some extent different in kind. The work of art is not produced merely for some ulterior purpose, which lies outside itself. Its main purpose is the contemplation of the beauty which is found in itself, apart from its usefulness for other purposes which lie beyond. If then the simile of the craftsman suggests that the world has been constructed as an instrument for use, the simile of the artist suggests that the world is fashioned as a thing for joyful contemplation, wherein the Creator can see accomplished the beauty which his soul has conceived. And this analogy will take us a step further, where the first proved most inadequate as a guide to the understanding of the creative work of God.

For (*a*) a picture or symphony has beauty and meaning even though it be unfinished. True, preparatory studies for a picture can only be properly appreciated when the whole picture has given them their fulfilment; nevertheless, they may be to some extent admirable and suggestive in themselves, before the final result has been reached. In the same way, an unfinished symphony has a meaning and value very different from that of an unfinished watch.

(*b*) Further, a work of art must always reveal and express the mind of the artist. A picture and a symphony are not things which can be turned out according to pattern by anyone who possesses a certain amount of technical skill. A real work of art is unique, because a man has expressed therein the aspiration of his soul. The religion of mediævalism lives on and speaks to us in the masterpieces of painting and music which it produced.

Thus the analogy of the artist enables us to conceive more clearly a gradual and still unfinished creation which is yet at every stage significant, and to grasp more completely

the idea of a world in which the Mind of its Maker is expressed.

(3) Let us now take a third simile from human powers of creation, which leaves behind altogether the material element in our universe. If we ask within our human world what is the most effective force in the creation of our souls, I suppose we should be bound to reply that it is the influence, and above all the love, of our fellow-men. It is a bare matter of fact that it is the love of parent, teacher and friend, which really makes the true character of a man, and enables him to become his true and perfect self, in so far as he succeeds at all in reaching his ideal. So far at least as appearances go, we are anything but ready-made personalities from the moment of our birth. It is the environment, above all the environment of other souls, which draws out of every man what he will one day be, and it is largely in proportion to the goodness and friendliness of that environment that he will attain the true goal of his spiritual growth. In every moment of our mutual converse we are in a very true sense creating each other. If, then, we are to think of God as the Creator of

souls, we must naturally think of Him also as their Lover. The creative love of men, whereby in the society of earth we make and determine each other, finds its source and its fulfilment in the Love of God, the ever-present environment of each of us, which makes and determines the development of all.

This analogy, if in love we touch the deepest nature of the Divine Being, is something more even than a simile, and should give us the greatest help of all. The activity of creative love will find the completion of its purpose in a perfect society of souls, bound each to each by the love of Him who is the origin and controller of the whole. And we are thus enabled to conceive a form of creation in which the Nature of the Creator can go forth into the creature, in such a way that the creature may itself freely share the Creator's work. For in proportion as love creates a soul, it communicates its own living essence to it. The love of the parent makes the child's character only through being itself born again in the child. And if in truth the love of God is creating the world, we can, without dishonour to Him or any assertion of indepen-



dence for ourselves, claim for ourselves a share in the creative work which in its wholeness flows from Him alone. It is peculiarly unfortunate that the human analogies under which God the Creator is usually conceived, should be drawn exclusively from man's powers of creation in the material sphere—creation in the material sphere is neither the only, nor even the highest, form of man's own creative activity.

We have then briefly sketched three distinct types of creative activity which we may endeavour to combine in order to form some rough idea of what we mean by believing in God as the Creator and Father of us and of the world. These types of human activity are those of the craftsman, the artist and the lover in the widest sense. These three types suggest three ways in which the relation between God and His creatures can be expressed in terms of the purpose of the Creator. The created world may be regarded as an instrument for God's use, as a work of beauty for his contemplation, and, finally, as a society of souls in which His nature of Love may be fulfilled and reciprocated. Finally, as regards



the method of creation, in affirming that the world was made by God, we do not affirm that it was ready-made from the beginning. The work is not complete ; we can only judge of its real nature from the ideas which our partial knowledge has given us of what it is still in process of bringing forth.

No effort has been made to estimate the evidence on which this Christian doctrine rests. All that has been attempted is to clear away certain general objections to its possibility, and to give some determinate idea of its meaning. Incidentally, however, we have at least indicated the exact relevance of the Christian doctrine of a loving Father and Creator to the deepest and most pressing problem of human life. The origin of a thing can only be really explained by its purpose. If, therefore, it is sought to account for the origin of ourselves and of the world, the really urgent question cannot be answered merely by tracing the steps which have brought us where we are, but rather by looking forward to the goal which our experience suggests that we are meant to achieve. The vital significance of the Christian doctrine of the

Creator lies precisely in the fact that it does make clear to us what that goal is, and by what road we must travel to attain it. And if that doctrine be true, then all the designed order and the wonderfully expressive beauty of our world, and every impulse of the human soul towards perfection, are explained and justified as the earnest of a coming fulfilment. In that explanation is found the answer to the question of their ultimate source. The proof, however, in so far as proof is possible, of the Christian doctrine of the Creator's character, remains a question of evidence. Do the facts of our world as we know it justify us in concluding that the Christian doctrine is really true? That is the question for the apologist of the faith. Our aim is not apologetic. We desire rather by drawing out the meaning of our faith to arrive at a standpoint from which the bearing of the facts and the kind of evidence which they supply, can be fairly estimated. And in spite of all that we have said hitherto, the great facts of evil, of suffering and of sin, will seem to many to render the result of an appeal to the whole evidence almost a foregone conclusion. While such

facts remain unexplained, they will say, we *cannot* believe that the God of Christianity really exists.

At the present stage of the discussion it would be idle to attempt to meet this challenge. The whole trend of our argument suggests that such answer as we may make to it later will be found by looking towards the future rather than towards the past, to the goal of our development, rather than to its starting-point. That is the point of view from which the greatest Christian thinkers have always regarded the problem of evil. "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the

redemption of our body. For by hope were we saved." And for that very reason we cannot be in a position to consider the problem of evil at all until we have first turned our eyes to the revelation of the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. There, for the Christian, is the one vital hope, which provides the key, though not yet the full solution, to the whole terrible enigma. Confronted, therefore, by evil we turn from God manifested through the world as its Creator, to God manifested in the world as its Saviour, in the Person of His Son.

## CHAPTER II

### CHRIST THE REVEALER

IT is more than chance which has placed together in the synoptic narrative the two incidents of our Lord's Transfiguration and of His healing of the epileptic boy. The contrast and the connection between them struck the fancy of more than one mediæval artist, and we find the two scenes depicted together on the same canvas. The artistic instinct here draws its inspiration from a profound theological truth. The double picture corresponds to two points of view from which the person and work of our Lord may be regarded. The uplifted Christ upon the mountain reveals the glory of God and of the Manhood which that glory transfigures. The Christ engaged in a work of healing amid the throng below is the same Saviour and Redeemer coming down to

cast out the devils of evil with which the earth is vexed. Yet the two aspects of our Lord's Person cannot be separated from each other. For the work of redemption is itself the greatest revelation of the Divine glory. And, equally, our Lord's whole power to redeem and save springs from the reality of the Godhead in Him revealed.

This latter truth is one which modern ways of thought have especially tended to obscure. There has been almost a craze for "humanism" in religion, to which many causes have contributed. Partly no doubt, as our last chapter has suggested, it is due to man's sub-conscious need for reassurance in face of a world increasingly oppressive in its complex immensity. Whatever the cause, however, the effect is plain. The popular mind and the prophets which it delights to follow have concentrated their attention upon the human attractiveness of the Man who went about doing good. They have rather tended to ignore the transfigured Son of God, and even to accuse of narrow-minded traditionalism those who have been most zealous in their witness to His glory. It is often forgotten

that if our Lord brings a gospel of eternal life at all, He can bring it only as the revealer of the nature of God, in the fullest sense of which those words are capable. What does His life tell us about God? There is the only real question, the only vital issue for religion. It is only if the revelation of God in Christ is unique, that Christ's life is of unique religious importance. It is only if Christ brings to us God Himself, that His message is a gospel of salvation.

Revelation and Redemption are therefore two aspects of one indivisible gospel. For convenience of exposition alone they must be handled separately, and then the aspect of revelation will naturally take first place. Let us make some attempt to define the meaning of the teaching of our Creeds about the Incarnation. We shall then be at least in a more favourable position to face its difficulties.

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is a revelation of God *to* Man. There must be depths and heights in the Divine Being which our minds cannot approach. But in so far as God's nature can be interpreted to man at all, that revelation is complete in the Person of

Jesus Christ. We know that if we want to explain anything to a child, we have to speak in language which the child can understand. There may be much which cannot be explained at all as yet, but if we use terms with which the child is already familiar, we may convey to him as much as he is able to receive, and, as his capacity grows, he will find an ever fuller significance. It is, of course, the essence of good exposition to use language at once simple and profound, language, that is, which has a meaning immediately apparent and yet also a meaning inexhaustible in the longest course of study. Such a perfect exposition of God is the life of Christ, Who is His living Word. In Him we find God explaining Himself in human terms to the limit of man's capacity to receive Him.

To say this is to say that the character of Christ is the very character of God Himself. The love for men which Christ displayed on earth is the love of God. His insight into their souls is the wisdom of God. His wrath against evil is the wrath of God. His power to cast out evil and conquer it is the power of God. And surely we cannot stop even there.



We must go on to say that the humility, the willingness to serve and suffer which we see in Christ, are themselves part of God's own self-giving which is the very proof of His power, His wisdom and His love.

We shall never have any grasp of the Sovereign Majesty of God until we realise that Christ has taught us a new way of regarding it. The Jews thought of Jehovah as an infinitely wise and powerful and righteous human potentate, an infinitely greater David Who held the world in the hollow of His hand. The picture was not wrong, but it was very incomplete. Our Lord came to earth to show mankind that there is a greater power than that which dashes its enemies in pieces by superior force, a deeper wisdom than that which silences its opponents by superior logic. There are the power and the wisdom of love, a power which works through patience, and a wisdom which shows itself in trust. Our human power and wisdom are not sure of themselves. We must strike at once, or we cannot be sure we are strong enough. We must justify ourselves at once, or we cannot be certain we are right. But the infinite

power and wisdom can work in the loving humility of service, and wait for that character so revealed to win the fullest victory of all, the victory which converts and convinces from within instead of coercing and confuting from without. We can even in our human experience see that in self-sacrifice are found the strongest force and the most persuasive appeal that this world knows. And, looking at Christ, we declare that He Who was God revealed the Divine Nature itself by being born at Bethlehem and by suffering upon the Cross—that Cross which St. Paul affirmed to be the wisdom of God and the power of God. St. Paul himself uttered only half the truth when he taught that the Son of God “emptied himself” in coming to earth to take upon Him the form of a servant. St. John uttered the other half in a paradox more startling and more profound. “The Word,” he said, “became flesh and dwelt among us, and we *beheld* His glory.”<sup>1</sup> It is no mere flight of sentimental fancy which has depicted the three royal sages offering their costliest treasures before the

<sup>1</sup> This contrast between St. Paul and St. John is brought out by Mr. William Temple in *Foundations*, p. 219.

cradle. That story is a parable of the great truth which St. Paul is making an almost despairing effort to express, when he says that the weakness of God is stronger than men and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. The authority of king and sage must do homage to that other wisdom and power of love revealed in defencelessness and innocence.

The first purpose then of the revelation of Jesus Christ is to make definite our idea of God. Apart from Him our conception of the divine character is lost in vagueness. Mysterious, incomprehensible that character must always be, but in Christ the luminous dark of mystery is substituted for the blinding fog of confusion. Believing that Jesus Christ is God, we ascribe to God a definite character, the character of love, wisdom and power which we find beneath the manhood of our Saviour.

The life of Christ therefore becomes for the Christian a test and standard of all the ideas about God which are current in the world. We can discover whether men's thoughts and actions are in correspondence with the character of God revealed in Christ. We can say : " Here they are right, for they follow Christ,"

and "Here they are wrong, for they reject Him." It would not be easy to overstate the need of our world for some such clear standard of right belief and conduct. The more we reflect and enquire, the more appallingly various men's ideas about God are found to be. This is an age of what we call freedom of thought, a phrase which means in practice that everyone believes what he likes. No variety or shade of tenet but finds its adherents and its champions, and those teachers, perhaps, are most widely commended who in the name of liberal views leave every man to the undisturbed enjoyment of that particular form of mental confusion which he happens to prefer. The end of it all must be sheer bewilderment, unless we strive to keep before our minds the standard which the life of Christ provides. To Him the Christian can turn in all perplexities, if in Him it is the very God Who stands revealed.

Breadth of mind, we may notice in passing, is assuredly not an over-rated virtue, but it is one which is woefully misunderstood. There are many who win a cheap reputation for it, simply because their views are easy-going or

ill-defined. But there could be no greater mistake than to suppose that to be definite in belief is to be narrow. True breadth of mind stands in the capacity to recognise and to appreciate goodness and truth wherever they are found, even in most unpromising surroundings, even in people who appear most ignorant and most misguided. But this most Christian of gifts can only flourish where there is a very definite ideal of what truth and goodness are. If, like our Master, we are to find the signs of God's presence everywhere in the world, even where it is most deeply hidden beneath the accumulations of folly and of sin, we must first have a quite definite idea of what God's character is. If Christ is God, then that definite idea is ours, and like Christ we shall be able to trace God's handiwork in the sinner and the outcast, and even in those from whom we differ on comparatively petty points. That is breadth of mind. To be careless about beliefs is not breadth of mind; it is only a form of spiritual sloth, more dangerous because so readily disguised. Surely we have not so learned Christ.

2. The life of Jesus Christ is therefore the

revelation of God to Man. But this statement does not exhaust its significance as a revelation. In it we find God revealed not only *to* man but *through* man, and thereby it reveals also man to himself. Christ is true man as well as true God, man just as truly when He was transfigured on the mountain, when he rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, as when He walked the streets of Capernaum or Nazareth. God therefore has used the manhood of Christ as the means and the vehicle of His revelation of Himself.

Now we are all of us men as Christ was man. That is the truth that theologians have been concerned to emphasise in teaching that the Manhood of Christ is universal and representative. His manhood is the same as ours, in the sense that through Him our manhood is taken up into His. If therefore God showed Himself through Christ, he can also show Himself through us. If God exalted Christ to Heaven, he can also exalt us. Christ therefore not only reveals to us God, He reveals to us also our true selves—that is, he reveals to us what we in Him are capable of becoming.

Let us consider how Christ came to be

exalted to the right hand of God, the steps which led up to the final glory of the Ascension. First, He lived the outward life of an ordinary human child. St. Luke tells us that He was subject to His parents at Nazareth, that He increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. Then came a period of early manhood which to us is veiled in obscurity. Apparently He shared the common work and pleasures of those around Him, and did nothing very strange or startling. Then he entered upon what we call in a special sense His ministry. He worked among men, teaching them about God, saving them from their sins, healing their diseases, comforting them in their sorrows. Also He shared their joys as well. We find Him a welcome guest in the houses of rich and poor alike. The Pharisee and the publican are equally his hosts; or He pays a quiet visit to the country home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Then finally our Lord suffers for men. He is misunderstood, persecuted, tortured and killed, and after that comes the final consummation—the resurrection of the same human Christ from the grave and His ascension into heaven.



The recapitulation of the various activities of our Lord's earthly life emphasises the truth, that they are all, manifold as they are, necessary stages in the path to the final glory. It was the whole way which He trod on earth, not any one part of it alone, which led up to the right hand of the Father. And because we are men, the story of our lives is meant to be the same. From Christ's life springs the glorious vision of what we ourselves in Him are capable of becoming. If a man's life is spent, for the main part in a dull round of commonplace occupations, if often he has opportunity of sharing others' joys and sympathising with their sorrows, if at times he is called upon to give definite help and guidance, if finally he has to suffer and to face the last terrible solitude of death, in all these aspects and incidents of life met, entered, and lived through after Christ's example, his manhood is one with Christ's, and the dullest and most difficult and most trivial hours mark necessary steps taken on the road towards the glory of the final Kingdom beyond the grave. That is the human hope anchored in the Incarnation, a hope of the possibilities of mankind made



like to its Saviour. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when it shall appear we shall be like Him."

3. And therefore if we would safeguard this double significance of Christ's life, we are driven to assert that He is God and man. His revelation is the joining of two natures. He brings God down to man so that man may see what God is. He raises man up to God, so that man may be used in God's service and glorified in His Presence. The revelation in Himself of that communion between two distinct natures is the whole meaning of Christ's Person, the fulfilment of that communion in the world is the whole purpose of Christianity. There, in a sentence, is the Christian gospel.

Let us notice more closely how that gospel depends upon the old affirmation of the Creed, that Christ is both perfect God and perfect Man. In our Lord, as we are bidden believe, we find two natures united yet retaining their proper characters. In Him they are joined, but not fused; they remain distinct, but not separate. They are one "not by confusion of substance but by unity of Person." That

is the orthodox doctrine, like all orthodoxies of to-day far less often and less ably defended than assailed. If we would appreciate its true significance, we must first ask the question, against what errors is it intended to be a safeguard ?

It is a tendency in all ages natural to the human soul to seek to interpose between itself and God some intermediate form of being. As we should expect in the case of a tendency so common, the motives from which it springs and the purposes at which it aims are by no means wholly discreditable to the minds which entertain them. The mystery and awe surrounding the inmost shrine of Deity make men hesitate to bring thither prayers wholly occupied with the daily needs of ordinary life. Their soul seeks after some being divine enough to be able to satisfy their wants, and human enough to be willing to respond to them. In the more highly developed religious consciousness the sense of distance from God takes shape in a conviction of defilement or sin, which makes man shrink from drawing near easily to the fount of holiness itself. In modern times, the same hesitation has been

intensified for different reasons. Man's increasing distrust of his own powers of knowledge has operated powerfully in causing reluctance to claim approach to God Himself. What can we know of the Maker, Governor or Immanent Spirit of the Universe, if such an one there be ? Let us rather be content with less ambitious aspirations, let us find the object of our religious thought, the aim of our religious endeavour, in something we can be certain of, something we can grasp and understand. God is too big and dangerous a word, but doubtless there are spiritual realities beyond our mere individual selves, wherewith we may satisfy our need for an ideal, our imperative longing after worship. Thus in all ages, though for various reasons, man has tried to put from him the very God and to substitute for Him some being who seems more within reach of his humble attainments and common-place desires. The heathen of old bowed down before his demi-god. The modern philosopher extols his super-man. The man, or more often the woman, of the world dabbles in spiritualism or plays with the unsubstantial hierarchies of theosophy. The ignorant

Roman Catholic addresses his prayers to Virgin or to saint, because he fancies them more sympathetic to his weakness than the Almighty. There is a common motive leading to all these aberrations. It is the old motive of idolatry, the old desire for some service less austere than that of the holy, unseen, eternal, One. The type of idolatry in all ages is Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin by setting calves in Bethel and Dan and saying to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem to worship." Such an appeal will never fail of its response while humanity remains a fallen race.

Therefore there is great danger lest our Lord Himself become the object of a worship which is in its essential nature idolatrous. Our attitude towards Him is idolatrous the moment we begin to think of Him as neither quite God nor quite man, but as something between the two. The temptation to do so is inevitable. When our thoughts start from the Godhead, it seems impossible that the lowly Jesus of Nazareth should be very God. When our thoughts start from manhood and all that the life of Jesus has meant to it,

Jesus seems to stand absolutely by Himself above the level of common humanity altogether. And so the result is too often a compromise instead of a reconciliation. We think of our Lord as neither fully God nor fully man, but as a being interposed between the two, combining elements of each. The essential heresy of Arianism lay in its attempt to regard our Lord as a lesser deity, and there is a modern Arianism or a tendency towards it, which prefers to address all its prayers and hymns to Jesus rather than to God, and yet feels vaguely uncomfortable when any direct assertion, not of the Divinity of Jesus merely, but of His Deity, is forced upon its attention.

Such idolatry, however skilfully dialectic may commend, however attractively sentiment may disguise it, misses utterly the significance of the Christian gospel. In proportion as Christ is inferior to the Godhead we cannot see God revealed in Him ; our faith is left in the dark. In proportion as Christ is superior to manhood, it is not *our* humanity which He has exalted ; we cannot see in Him the revelation of our own possibilities ; we doubt our capacity to follow. Evade the

issue how we will, a Christ Who is intermediate between God and man, merely emphasises their separation. The Christ of the Gospels only unites God and man because He is perfectly both. The result of the false view will be to acquiesce in an object of worship less than the very God, and in a standard of conduct lower than that of perfect man. The result of the true view is to worship the very God and to follow the perfect man, both in Christ revealed.

But when we have thus insisted on the union of the two natures in Christ, we must go on to emphasise the vital importance of maintaining their distinctness. There is after all a sound instinct behind that sense of the otherness of God, which has led man into the idolatrous worship of intermediate beings. God is not man, nor man God even "in the germ." Ideally, God is in man and man in God; it was to restore that communion to fallen humanity that Christ came to earth to be the perfect Mediator. But even in Christ manhood is not itself deified. To make the distinction between God and man into an insuperable barrier is the sin of idolatry; to

seek to remove it altogether is the sin of a perverted mysticism. The full communion between the Divine and the human is hindered just as much by identifying them or confusing them with each other, as by holding them apart.

Religious mysticism of recent years has aroused a new attention for which we may be rightly thankful. Unluckily the interest shown in mysticism has increased rather than diminished the difficulty of defining the term itself, which, like socialism, is in danger of losing all real value from the very variety of its abuse. Speaking generally, belief is, in the spiritual sphere, distinguished from mystical experience in the same way as in the physical sphere belief is distinguished from direct perception. I know London, where I live, by direct perception; I know Australia, where I have never been, partly by believing what I am told, partly by the inferences of my own reason. Similarly I may believe in God partly on the strength of what I am told partly as the result of my own reflection upon the facts of life. But mysticism offers something more, something which may almost be called a direct perception of God's being, a



form of experience in which my own faculties may apprehend His presence and nature immediately. Such experiences are often spoken of as though they were confined to those who possess special faculties of the spirit carefully trained for their high purpose. This is, no doubt, to some extent the case; yet many perhaps would discover in themselves gifts for such inward converse with the Divine, if the exercises of prayer and meditation were more widely and assiduously practised. The mysterious sense of the Divine Presence, which takes hold on most religious people with an added conviction at certain times and in special circumstances, should no doubt be classified as falling under the head of mystical experience, though we should by no means assume that such feelings are unrelated to physical conditions, or that they are less liable to error and misuse than our ordinary perceptions of sight and hearing.

Be that as it may, the mission of mysticism is to proclaim God as a living presence in the soul, and thereby to make religion the experience of a communion instead of merely the assent to a formulary, the inference of an



argument, or the obedience to a command. And no doubt our mystical faculties, like others, demand, and will repay, cultivation. The mystic saints, who may be considered experts in the matter, have subjected themselves to most exacting and prolonged discipline, and all authorities are agreed that some such exercises of a devotional aim ought to form part of our religious education. But like all the arduous achievements of humanity, mysticism is highly dangerous. We need a guide along the path who is familiar also with the surrounding country. We are on the edge of an abyss, the moment we emphasise the reality of the inner communion with God in such a way that God Himself begins to be represented simply as an inward presence pervading human life or the life of the world as a whole. It is well to assert that the Word of God is very nigh unto us, in our mouth and in our hearts, and that He Himself is closer to us than our own bodies. Yet it is fatally easy to pass from that assertion to the thought that we are ourselves divine, that to vex ourselves over our sins and limitations is waste of energy, that all we have to do is to

realise how great and good we may be—and forthwith the mists of our doubts and the shadows of our failures will vanish in the new light shed by the revelation of our own higher and diviner Self. It seems a long way from the extravagant self-abasement of Christian mystics like Francis of Assisi, to the teaching of the latest American apostle, who would have us cure our toothaches by remembering that we are conscious parts of the Deity.<sup>1</sup> In reality the step from one to the other is just as long, and just as short, as the step from the top of a precipice to the bottom.

There are not a few modern teachers who seem to have taken such a step in sublime unconsciousness of the fall which it involves. They are those, generally speaking, who magnify experience in order to belittle dogma. The very different types of thought which are represented by Eucken in Germany, by Royce and James in America, and by Evelyn Underhill<sup>1</sup> in England, besides the far less profound theology of the Mind-Cure Movement,<sup>2</sup> all tend to the

<sup>1</sup> In Miss Underhill's case the tendency is only implicit and apparently unconscious. Cf. *e.g.* *The Mystic Way*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> cf. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 102, etc.

baneful identification of the soul in its highest experiences with the Divine Being which those experiences present. In making religion begin and end with human experience, in representing its claim simply as an appeal to us to realise our own spiritual capacities, they are in grave danger of inviting men to part among them the garments of a dishonoured Deity.

Perhaps the recent course of history with the emphasis it has laid on the persistence of all that is basest in man's nature, will have the salutary effect of exposing the hollowness of the pretence that man can in his own right claim any sort of divinity for himself.<sup>1</sup> Many of the recent performances of humanity furnish rather a caustic commentary on such aspira-

<sup>1</sup> This hope is hardly justified by such a discussion of our Lord's Divinity as that contributed by Mr. Harold Anson to *Faith or Fear?* (Macmillan, 1916). The author, indeed, quotes with approval the teaching of the Athanasian Creed that the Incarnation means not the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but the taking of the manhood into God; but on the subject of "confusion of substance," he is significantly silent. Mr. Streeter's argument (*Restatement and Reunion*, pp. 12 and 13) that we may infer our Lord's Divinity simply from the ideal perfection of His humanity, is also dangerous, in that it may lead us to suppose that the Godhead of Jesus Christ is not *another* Nature than His Manhood. I have here tried to explain the value of the "orthodox" distinction.

tions. But heresies, like decimals, may always recur at the longest intervals, and it is well to see clearly, if possible, the point of departure from which this form of error has set forth, so that we may mark its path as a deviation from the line of true progress in the knowledge of God. We are on the wrong track the moment the distinction between the two natures united in Christ's Person is forgotten or disparaged. The moment the Godhead and manhood are confused it becomes easy and almost inevitable to assert that since His Manhood is ours, His Divinity is possible for us also. Ideally, we shall begin to say, we are all as divine as He ; it will only need an effort on our part to realise the Deity which is already ours. In using such language we may believe that we are only claiming a direct access to God for ourselves. But we cannot escape the practical result, that the centre of gravity in our religion shifts from our Lord to our own souls. We shall, in effect, soon leave Christ behind.<sup>1</sup> It will be to our own

<sup>1</sup> Herrmann (*Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 30, English Edition) maintains that the mystic in "finding God" is bound to "leave Christ behind."

experiences, our own feelings, our own achievements, that we shall turn in our search for communion with God. We shall judge Christ by them, instead of judging them by Christ. The last stage will be reached when we regard the Godhead Itself as no more than an experience of our own ; and just when we think we have scaled Heaven itself, we shall in reality have done no more than drag down with us into the pit where we have fallen a god of our own imagination. For our religion will be self-centred, and nothing can draw us out of the morass save the divine compassion of the Saviour we have misunderstood.

We cannot then appreciate the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation unless we keep before our minds the two opposite errors which it is intended to exclude, the error of idolatry and the error of pseudo-mysticism. Yet it may be truly said that the exposure of the fatal consequences to which such heresies lead, does not in itself make the Church's teaching of the two natures any more intelligible. How are we to think of Christ as God and man ? How is such a union in distinction conceivable to our mind ?

That is a question which is left for our human intelligence to answer, guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the dogmas of our creeds are intended primarily as safeguards against error, not as expositions of new truth.<sup>1</sup> The Incarnation is the mystery of a gospel, proved in the experience of centuries. The Church is not concerned to explain the mystery, but to preserve it from being explained away. So long as we protect the evangelical significance of the union of God and man in Christ, no speculation of ours can dishonour His Person. For the purpose of His revelation is to be a gospel; and by its evangelical value its truth must stand. There will therefore be abundant room for variety of interpretation and treatment, when we come to consider, so far as we reverently can, the manner of the union of God and man in Christ. The creeds do not tie us down to any one theory; they may be interpreted by all.

Such speculations do not come within our

<sup>1</sup> For a further discussion of this point see Ch. VI. I have also dealt with the same subject in *Modern Philosophy and the Incarnation* (S.P.C.K., 1915), Ch. IV.

present scope. We must, however, attempt some reply to one or two obvious objections. It will be said : " You have already confused the divine and human natures in our Lord by saying that in the human characteristics of Jesus we see the character of God. If the man Jesus reveals and mediates God to us, how can we any longer distinguish in Him the human from the divine ? "

The authors of the Athanasian Creed seem to have been aware of this difficulty, and they point the way to what is perhaps the best answer that has yet been devised. " For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man : so God and Man is one Christ." The value of this article of the creed has often been misunderstood. It is not intended to draw a complete parallel between the relation of soul to body and the relation of the divine to the human nature of our Lord. The analogy may well be put forward as an answer to objections of the type we are now considering. The objector points out that the faith which enables us to see God in Jesus prevents us from separating His human from His divine attributes. We cannot say, " This in Him is God, not man,"



or "That in Him is man, not God." For, in knowing Him as man we are to know God. How then is it possible to distinguish in Him the divine from the human nature? This argument is met by an analogy. In every man we distinguish a spiritual or psychical from a physical element; yet both are involved in all his thoughts and words and acts in such a way that it is impossible to analyse completely any one of them into separate psychical and physical components. We talk of physical strength, but the strength cannot be used or shown apart from the psychical force which controls it. We talk of mental dispositions, but we have no knowledge of them apart from the physical organism through which they are expressed. Yet the distinction remains perfectly real. For we do not identify the spiritual life with that which transmits and embodies it, any more than we identify the light of the sun with the atmosphere and ether which alone transmit it to our vision. We are then to think of the union of two natures in our Lord in the manner which such analogies suggest. His human nature transmits and expresses the divine. Both are



involved, or may be involved, in all His acts and words. In each we see the divine nature transmitted by a human medium, but we can never separate the Deity which is expressed from the humanity which expresses it.

But this answer, it will be said, only leads to fresh difficulty. For all human nature, in so far as it is good and Christ-like, transmits and expresses the nature of God. How, then, is Christ unique and different from all other men? Is it only because His humanity is sinless and therefore transmits the divine nature perfectly? In that case, all human nature potentially shares the Deity of Christ Himself, and the way is open to the disastrous errors we have already pointed out. There is, however, an ultimate difference between the indwelling of the Godhead in Christ and the indwelling of the Godhead in an ordinary human being, however truly redeemed and perfected. Christ is God from the beginning. In His Incarnation He takes up manhood into Himself and reveals Himself through it, but the Godhead remains His own proper and essential nature. In the ordinary man, on the other hand, the indwelling of the divine

nature is a gift from without bestowed by the grace of God. The man's own nature is not divine, but because the Godhead of Christ has exalted manhood, man himself is taken up in Christ and by Christ into communion with God. In so far then as a man is redeemed from sin, God dwells in him and reveals Himself through him to the utmost limit of possibility. Sin is the only barrier to that union. But the union only takes place in and through Christ. It is the Incarnation and Ascension of Christ which bestow the gift. Man does not attain to it in his own right or by virtue of his own nature. It is Christ and Christ alone Who takes up the manhood into God. It is as a member of Christ alone that a man can both reveal and live in union with the Godhead. In proportion as his faith gains clear expression, it will be entirely centred in Christ, not in any capacity of his own.

The distinction just drawn fits in exactly with what the greatest followers of Christ tell us of their experience, and with what the gospels tell us of our Lord. The most characteristically Christian men have always been

the most eager to insist that their whole spiritual attainment has been something given them by God, not something which they themselves either possessed from the beginning or achieved by their own efforts. It has all been a gift which somehow came to them through Christ. That is the truth which they seek to convey in passionate declarations of their own unworthiness and insufficiency. But as far as the Bible record goes, there is certainly no hint of any such feeling in our Lord Himself. He declares the purpose and counsel of God with complete assumption of His full right and authority to do so. He accepts the highest titles without question or demur, alike when they are bestowed on Him by His disciples and when His claims are made the subject of an accusation by His enemies.<sup>1</sup> The old dilemma, "*aut Deus aut homo non bonus*," has never been fairly rebutted.

Our attempt has been to give some reasons why our creeds ask us to accept their doctrine

<sup>1</sup> The solitary and quite superficial exception in Mark x. 18 is really insufficient to bear the weight of argument which distressed critics have been obliged to lay upon it.

of the Person of our Lord. We have dealt with it, as the creeds deal with it, from a strictly theological standpoint. To the historical aspect and the difficulties which surround it, only a bare allusion has been made. And to many therefore it will seem that the main issue has been shirked. Yet it may be that the one-sidedness of our discussion has not been without its value ; for possibly modern thought has in part perplexed itself through stating the problem in an imperfect form.

We live in an age which has gone so far towards substituting psychology for metaphysics and historical criticism for theology, that it has often ceased to be aware of the transition. In ancient Greece and on into the Middle Ages the main question of philosophy took the form "What really exists ?" or, "What does real existence mean ?" From Descartes onwards the centre of interest began to shift from the object to the subject, and the question became, "What can I know ?" or, "What conclusions as to the nature of the world does the validity of my knowledge imply ?" Finally, the object of knowledge

has retired into the background altogether, and pragmatism harps insistently on the question, "What do I mean by 'knowing'?" or "What is the actual process which knowing involves?" Technically speaking, the transition has been from ontology through epistemology to psychology. The question, "What is?" has passed into the question, "What can I know?" and this again into the question, "How do I know?" This latter question, which falls within the province of psychology, has of late been the chief centre of interest. The result has been that all problems and theories are stated in terms of human consciousness. The human mind has occupied itself with the study of its own processes, even at times to the neglect of the objects towards which those processes are or should be directed. Pragmatism, for instance, has tried as far as possible to avoid stating conclusions as to the nature of the world, its ostensible aim being to set forth a philosophic method which may be used by thinkers of differing views. In effect, however, it has often represented "reality" and "truth" (which are the *objects* of knowing) as means whereby we gain

successful knowledge, instead of representing knowledge as a means whereby we reach reality and truth.

But the change has spread far outside the immediate province of philosophy. In education, for instance, the study of and the response to the mental processes of the child (essentially questions of method) have often superseded the consideration of the prior problem, What is the aim of education? What is it really desirable that the child should be taught? In religion, as we have frequently noticed, "experience" is valued often to the depreciation of the particular object of belief to which the experience points. Belief in an object is valued solely for the contribution it makes to "satisfactory" experience, rather than experience judged by its bearing upon true belief. Discussions about the Person of our Lord have been drawn into the stream of the same general movement. The problem has been approached entirely from the psychological and historical side. In other words, consideration of the method and manner of the Incarnation has excluded the consideration of its objective

reality. "How are we to conceive the actual consciousness of Jesus?" has been the one question asked. If He be God, what precise difference did that fact make to His consciousness while He wore our mortal flesh? God, for instance, is omniscient: are we therefore to suppose that all conceivable knowledge was always present to the mind of Jesus? What did He think of Himself, His mission and His nature? In particular, did He suppose that He was to come again in the clouds to herald the end of the world a few years after He had left it? It is assumed that the whole solution of the problem of our Lord's Person lies in the answer to these questions. As soon as we have answered them, and not before, we shall know what to believe about our Lord's Deity; and unless we know all about the consciousness of Jesus upon earth, we cannot believe rightly about the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such have been the assumptions underlying much recent controversy and criticism. And even on the orthodox side the tendency has sometimes been to argue that if our Lord was both God and Man, then, while on earth, He must have



had both a divine and a human consciousness, that He used either at will, and that researches into the phenomena of multiple consciousness, the discovery of the subliminal self, and other studies of the psychologist, provide the true and only key to the whole enigma of the combination of the two natures. When the facts seem to show that our Lord's human knowledge was limited, or even liable to what looks like error, then forthwith we are invited either to abandon our belief in His Deity as an impossible figment, or to stake our whole faith on some new psychological theory of consciousness.

In these circumstances it is imperative to distinguish clearly between the revelation which is the central object of belief, and the particular methods and processes through which we may or may not believe the revelation to have been transmitted. The creeds require us to believe that in our Lord's Incarnate Person two natures, divine and human, are made one ; but the mode of their union is left, as it must always remain, a mystery. The general meaning and value of the theological belief in the union of the two



natures has already been sketched ; it does not of itself necessarily involve any particular theory of the manner in which they were combined, or of the effect of that combination upon our Lord's consciousness in the days of His flesh. Certainly such theories have a bearing on the theological belief ; all suggestions as to the possible manner of the Incarnation have a real value as illustrating the central fact ; and ultimately, no doubt, some such theory must be included in a completely adequate knowledge. But meanwhile the theological belief in our Lord as God and Man must be kept independent of particular explanations. The central faith of our creeds is an eternal possession, far too precious and too sacred to be staked on any particular doctrines of philosophy or science, which must of their nature vary from age to age in accordance with the shifting outlooks and interests of successive generations. Only if this distinction is preserved, can faith in the Christian revelation safeguard and receive witness from the fullest measure of the free speculation which it should inspire in every branch of human thought.

It is not at all implied however that the problem of our Lord's earthly consciousness can or ought to be wholly shelved, and we may proceed in conclusion to outline a few tentative suggestions upon the subject. The union of the two natures does not necessarily correspond to anything that can be called duality of consciousness in the Jesus of the Gospels. And if our interpretation of the Church's doctrine is the right one, we shall be very careful how we allow ourselves to suggest that on earth He possessed consciously a knowledge as God, which He did not possess consciously as Man, or that He performed certain actions as God, while He did and endured other things as Man. Rather the Godhead through Manhood is revealed in all that He thought and said, all that He wrought and suffered.

Perhaps we shall be able to face all the difficulties connected with our Lord's earthly consciousness and actions with greater freedom and assurance, if we start from the thought that the earthly life of Jesus is only one act of the eternal life of the Word of God. It is an act in which the whole nature of Christ is

revealed, just as our whole selves may be revealed in one supremely characteristic action. By calling an act "characteristic" we mean that it points beyond itself to a personality which in a sense is wholly present in it, but which it does not in itself exhaust. A man's whole character may live and express itself in one word or look, but only because that word or look points beyond itself to a personality wholly revealed yet not wholly *contained* within it. Technically speaking, the act is characteristic, because it is *self-transcendent*. Should we not look on the Incarnation (including in that word the whole earthly life of Christ) as, in a similar sense, a self-transcendent act of the Word of God? It is an act supremely characteristic, because in it dwells all the fulness of God's Nature, and because therefore it points beyond itself to the Godhead which in it is revealed, yet not contained or comprehended. Surely much of the difficulty connected with our Lord's earthly consciousness springs from attempting to suppose that in His Manhood His Godhead must be comprehended. Against this attempt our creed expressly warns us ;

we should rather enquire how through His Manhood His Godhead is revealed. The two ideas are totally distinct, and the confusion between them has been disastrous. It is not only heretical but also silly to suppose that the divine omniscience and almightiness can be contained or comprehended in the "reasonable soul and human flesh" which were born of Mary. It is hardly less incredible that they existed as a superadded and separate consciousness present, either constantly or on occasions, to our Lord's incarnate mind. This is an attempt to think what is in the long run impossible and meaningless. Whatever our Lord on earth may have known, He cannot have been conscious of every irrelevant detail of possible human knowledge. Whatever may have been His mysterious powers, there must be many things which, in the tabernacle of the flesh, He could not do. The probable limitations of His knowledge and power may be a subject for reverent enquiry. But it does not at all follow that the omniscience and almightiness of God are not fully revealed through the whole incarnate life of Christ, which is their characteristic act.

Let us take a fuller illustration. Suppose some professor desires to teach a child the elements of the subject in which he is an expert. If his teaching is to be ideally good, the first essential must be that he put himself at the ignorant child's point of view, so that he sees things with the child's eyes and feels the child's perplexities. In other words, he must in some sense take on him the nature of the child. And this will involve what we may call a self-limitation of sympathy. He must put out of his mind the problems with which he has been grappling for his forthcoming book; he must forget the phraseology of his classic article in the latest technical encyclopædia. He must put himself back at the beginning of the subject, that he may guide another beginner along the first stages of his journey. And yet the one thing he must not do is to forget the way. His own more recondite knowledge will not occupy his attention, yet it will reveal itself surely and clearly in the certainty with which he surmounts the initial obstacles and avoids the first easy by-paths which lead to nothing. The exposition of a teacher less expert could

not be at once so simple and so true to the deepest principles of the subject. No doubt the greatest experts in any art or science are seldom the best teachers of it, just because the gift of sympathetic self-limitation is so rare. But when this gift is present, no depth of knowledge in the teacher is really wasted in his teaching.

May we not in all reverence apply this analogy to the incarnate consciousness of our Lord? At Bethlehem the Word of God was born as a human child that by so limiting Himself He might guide other children in their first faltering steps along the path which leads to the knowledge of Himself. On Calvary He suffered that He might light up for other sufferers the dark and narrow highway to His eternal throne. In a true sense He emptied Himself that He might do these things. Yet in Bethlehem and on Calvary and at every point in His earthly ministry the Divine Power and Wisdom act and are glorified through the very limitations which the Divine Sympathy has imposed. No wisdom less than that of God could have devised a manner of self-revelation so per-

fectly adapted to man's need. No power less than that of God could have enabled man to win so complete a triumph over the powers of evil.

In such an interpretation of the earthly life of Jesus much remains beyond our comprehension, much is left for reverent enquiry to search out. But surely we have found a guiding truth. And since it is the revelation of a mystery which we desire to show forth, we must not seek to dispel all the mystery of the revelation.

## CHAPTER III

### CHRIST THE REDEEMER —(A) THE ATONEMENT

How does the Revelation which our Lord brought affect the conditions under which mortal life is passed ? What is the salvation which it brings to a world so terribly different from the Heaven whence He came ?

Christ's message of redemption has been expressed and defined in three great Christian doctrines—the doctrine of the Atonement, the doctrine of the Judgement, and the doctrine of Human Resurrection. The doctrine of the Atonement tells us of an escape from the bondage of sin. The doctrine of the Judgement warns us of the consequences of neglecting that escape. The doctrine of Resurrection promises us the reward which shall be theirs who do not neglect it. By the three great doctrines of Redemption the



Revelation of our Lord is placed in a threefold relationship to our lives—first, as an opportunity ; secondly, as a warning ; thirdly, as a promise. We will consider them in order.

The doctrine of the Atonement has always been recognised by the Catholic Church as in one sense the first and most essential doctrine of Christianity. In another sense, the doctrine of Incarnation stands first, since it is on the reality of the Incarnation that the whole possibility of redemption depends. Nevertheless, the Atonement is the primary aim and purpose of the Incarnation, since it was to save His people from their sins that Jesus was born.

The primary importance of the Atonement in the Christian creed has always seemed clearest to those whom we should call, in the narrower sense, the greatest saints and the greatest sinners. In other words, the Atonement has been the greatest power of God to those who possess the deepest consciousness of sin. But among the generality of mankind the sense of sin—it is a commonplace to say it—has been on the wane during the last thirty years. It is precisely for that

reason that the essential purpose of the Christian revelation, and of the organised system designed for its stewardship, has been so disastrously misconceived and misunderstood. The so-called "problem of evil" indeed is always with us. Men are continually urging it as an objection fatal to the whole faith of Christianity. But failure to realise the fact of sin has prevented them from appreciating either the true conditions of the problem or the solution which Christianity has to offer. At the risk, therefore, of indulging in a rather barren and metaphysical argument we must begin at the beginning of the subject and seek first to define the terms of the discussion.

In the doctrine of the Atonement Christianity offers to man a means of escape from bondage to evil ; it does not offer at once an adequate explanation of its existence. That is to say, the official theology of the Church has followed the example of its Founder in treating evil as an enemy to be fought, before treating it as a problem to be solved. Now the reason why the existence of evil seems to many an insuperable objection to faith, lies

precisely in the fact that they insist in regarding evil as a problem before they regard it as an enemy ; they want to explain it first and to fight it afterwards. But to adopt this order of procedure is to fall into manifest error. Why is the problem of evil so acute ? Only because evil is such a repulsive thing, because we desire to flee from it, because we feel it ought not to be there, because it stirs all the power of will and emotion to get rid of it. If evil is not a thing to escape or destroy, then there is no sense in calling it evil, and the problem disappears. Again, if evil cannot be escaped or destroyed, to discuss its explanation is waste of time, and the problem is of no importance. It is only when a possible means of escape or victory appears, that the problem of evil becomes real ; and Christianity therefore appreciates the problem of evil far better than its opponents, when it offers us first the means of escape or the power to fight, and bids us wait for the explanation till afterwards.

This argument, though somewhat subtle, is not as dialectical as it seems, and may perhaps be more clearly stated in another

form. In the case of any particular thing which is evil we may separate and study the problem of its existence altogether apart from the attempt to get rid of it ; but only if we cease for a time to treat it as evil. It is quite possible, for instance, to study the nature and origin of disease-germs apart from any effort to destroy them ; but in that case the student ceases to be concerned with their evil character. The writer well remembers a specimen of tuberculous lung being shown to him by a scientific investigator, who in all good faith drew attention to its " beauty." The investigator had no thought of the evil in the diseased pieces of tissue, simply because he was not immediately concerned to destroy the disease. He was studying it, and the particular specimen of it was so excellent that it moved the student's admiration. This separation of the evil thing from its evil character is quite legitimate and even necessary in particular cases and for particular purposes. But when we are dealing with evil as a whole, or evil as such, to attempt any separation of the kind even in thought is obviously absurd. For we cannot separate

evil itself from its own character as a thing repulsive, disgusting, to be fled from, or fought to the death. To treat evil itself in a dispassionate spirit merely as a problem or subject of study is to deny to it its real character, to treat it as something other than it is. It belongs to the essential distinction between good and evil that one is to be sought and established, the other to be avoided and cast down. Deliberately to seek evil and eschew good is to say, "Evil be thou my good," and "Good be thou my evil." Such a proceeding involves not merely a moral crime but also an intellectual falsehood. And to treat good and evil simply as theoretic problems apart from the consideration of our practical behaviour towards them, must tend to the confusion of the distinction between them. That is the reason why almost all philosophic theories of evil are so profoundly unsatisfying. No doubt philosophers who treat evil as a problem to be solved, may and do also treat it as an enemy to be fought. Their error lies in trying to keep the two points of view distinct, and in imagining that while evil is treated dispassionately as a neutral, any

solution of the problem can be found. The problem of evil is essentially how to fight and to escape it. To treat evil in any other way is in effect to deny the problem and make solution superfluous, even were it possible.

The Christian gospel then meets the difficulties of the problem in the truest way by subordinating its explanation of evil to the means of overcoming it which it provides. True, it cannot provide those means without making some assertion about the origin of evil. It must deny that God is its cause; it must deny also that there is a devil beyond God's power of control; for thus alone can it maintain the ultimate difference and contrast between good and evil, while affirming the Almighty Righteousness and Love, on which the whole gospel rests. But it leaves the theoretic explanation of its dogma to appear, when its offer of salvation has been accepted. Meanwhile it calls upon our faith.

Yet another consideration points to the reasonableness of this procedure. The result of evil upon those whom it affects from within is not only to pervert the will but to warp the judgement. Evil prevents a man not only

from walking uprightly but also from seeing straight. Mr. Bernard Shaw in the preface to one of his volumes of plays<sup>1</sup> thus accounts for the failure of his early efforts as a novelist. He tells us how he once had his eyes tested by an oculist. This oculist found Mr. Shaw's eyesight quite uninteresting, because it was normal; but on being asked further whether normal vision were commonplace, he replied, that, on the contrary, it was very rare. In the physical sphere then quite normal vision is unusual, and Mr. Shaw concludes, somewhat hastily perhaps, that in the spiritual sphere his views are unusual, not because his spiritual vision is perverted, but because it is quite normal. The analogy is instructive. But what if normal vision in spiritual things is rarer even than Mr. Shaw, in his vicarious humility, supposes? What if none of us can see really clear and straight? If that be so, we cannot perhaps see evil in its true colours because it is still dimming our eyes. We cannot account for it, because it is still darkening our understandings. In these circumstances is it un-

<sup>1</sup> *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*, Vol. I.



reasonable that we should first try a remedy which promises to free our faculties from the influence of evil, and trust that afterwards we shall understand whence the influence came? Surely Christianity is most reasonable in confronting the evil of the world with an Atonement, a message of victory and release. No objection to its appeal can be based on the ground that the explanation of evil is not first declared. In the nature of the case evil must be got rid of before it can be explained, and attempts to explain it first are from the outset doomed to failure.

In the light of the gospel-message we must now examine more closely how the nature of evil appears and what is the salvation which Christ has brought. Evil the enemy has a double form. It takes the form of sin and the form of suffering which culminates in death. Evil then appears not as one enemy only, but as two. Over both the gospel of the Atonement offers an ultimate triumph, but the first enemy against which it inspires our conflict and promises victory is sin. The *last* enemy that shall be destroyed is death. That triumph will be accomplished only



when the conquest of sin is complete. Until sin is conquered, suffering and death must be endured, and indeed it is through following Christ in the endurance of them that the victory over sin is won. It is sin alone therefore that here and now must be treated as evil without qualification.

Here, then, is the first lesson of the Atonement, that the essential nature of evil is sin. And this is in accord with the teaching of our own experience. Human nature, in regarding suffering and death as evil, has always found their essential cause in sin. The connection between cause and effect has often been crudely represented, as in the disciples' question, "Did this man sin or his parents, that he was born blind?" But the fact that the blame for a particular case of suffering cannot always be attributed to a particular person, does not at all destroy the other fact, that so long as we regard suffering as in the full sense evil, we are bound to find its cause in something which has the nature of sin. Take any case of innocent suffering brought about, so far as we can tell, by pure accident. Why do we

regard it as evil, why does it excite feelings of protest, indignation and revolt? Surely because we feel such suffering to be peculiarly unjust, unrighteous and cruel. If it can be shown that the suffering is none of these things, then our protest ceases, we no longer regard the suffering as evil in the worst and truest sense. But injustice and cruelty belong essentially to the character not of suffering but of sin. Therefore the conclusion follows that when we regard a thing as evil, we attribute to it inevitably the nature of sin. A man may be driven by suffering to curse God and die; yet thereby he is witness, that it is not simply suffering as such which has brought him to despair, but the merciless cruelty which the suffering to him expresses. There is surely a strange confusion in the minds of some writers, who, in order to acquit mankind of guilt, deny the existence of sin in the world, and yet persist in implying that the suffering of the innocent remains as evil as before. Obviously, if there is no sin, there can be no cruelty or injustice, and if there is no cruelty or injustice in suffering, then it is difficult to see in what sense suffering is evil.

The argument is difficult to grasp, just because the language we use so habitually implies that everything which is in the full sense evil has the nature of sin. But let us steadily think away from our idea of evil everything that suggests sinfulness, and note the result. Consider some evil event, which does not appear to be directly due to sin, say, the crushing to death of a child in an accidental collision. Of course if the result be simply that the child is taken away to a happier life, we shall gladly admit that the event is not really evil at all; and it will cease to be evil, not because the pain of the death disappears, but because the unfairness and cruelty of it are removed by the result. But if we still think of the event as really evil, and yet remove from it all notion of sinfulness, all idea that it is really cruel or unfair, are we not reduced to hopeless self-contradiction? Must we not admit that we called the event evil, chiefly because we thought it so cruel; and that if the evil of it be reduced to mere pain devoid of all moral meaning whatsoever, the evil itself begins to disappear? If then evil be real,

if it be more than a mere hallucination and more than a mere transition towards good, it is impossible to think that it has its source and ultimate nature in mere pain, that it signifies nothing sinful in the constitution of our world. For if we suppose that pain be a real evil, not a transition towards happiness and goodness, then immediately the existence of pain in the world appears as cruel, that is sinful. And we may go further. Even if that appearance be delusive, even if the cruelty and injustice of the world are mere ideas of ours with no existence at all anywhere, then our world becomes a deceitful mockery, a vanity of vanities, more than ever in its essential constitution immoral, more than ever the kind of world we should have expected it to be, if a lying devil had made and were ruling it.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot really escape the conclusion. The sting, the bitterness, the essential nature of evil are only found in sin. We know not, perhaps, where the sin resides, nor whence it came, nor who should bear the blame for

<sup>1</sup> The effect of this argument is to establish the reality of sin by a sort of ontological proof.

its existence. But it is the essential evil of the world. We are in evil case because somehow we are infected by its influence, and in recognising this truth the gospel of the Atonement at once attacks the enemy in his real stronghold.<sup>1</sup>

How then in the light of the gospel does the nature of sin appear? Our conception of sin will always depend on what is to us the highest revelation of goodness. If the highest good we know is to realise our own ideal, or our higher self (as the cant phrase has it), then sin is simply our failure to do so, a falling short of a possible achievement. If the highest good is the fulfilment of a law, then sin is a breaking of the law, a transgression or a trespass. If the highest good is to live in communion with God, to be in truth the child of a Heavenly Father, then sin is essentially a breach of that personal relationship, and its result the separation from God which such a breach effects. That is the Christian conception. The gospel seeks to

<sup>1</sup> The further definition of the relation of pain to sin and the message of the gospel in regard to pain we leave for discussion in Chapter V.

assure us that when the appalling sinfulness of things seems to shut out the very possibility of the Divine goodness, we have not yet penetrated to the secret of the universe ; we are in the presence of a vast barrier which shuts us out from the knowledge and the fellowship of the Love which is still almighty. Every wrong thought or act is essentially sinful, because it rejects that Love and fortifies further the obstacle which hides it from our knowledge.

In other words, we are to conceive the whole sin of the world on the analogy, more or less, of the misdoings and misunderstandings which probably caused the most unhappy hours of our childhood. Consider the relationship of any normally naughty child to any normally good and loving parent. The childish offence consists essentially in the rejection of the parent's loving care, which has probably taken the form of some salutary prohibition which the child disobeys. The immediate consequence of the disobedience is the separation from fellowship. The open, frank relationship of mutual trust and affection is at once impaired.

The child feels the difference none the less acutely because he is unable to define it, and he may very probably be driven into deceit, not so much in order to screen himself as to recover what he has lost. The attempt is always a failure, and unless some kind of reconciliation—expressed or understood—takes place, a quite trivial misdeed may bear a whole harvest of misunderstanding and estrangement. For the presence of sin not only burdens the conscience, but warps the judgment. To the unrepentant child even the kindest of fathers will appear unfair, harsh and suspicious.

Now it is on this analogy, in a broad sense, that the Christian gospel interprets the evil of the world. Sin effects an alienation from, a breach of fellowship with, God, and the doubts and horrors and pessimisms of humanity have their source in the nature of sin. It is because of wrong done and love rejected that our spiritual vision is so distorted and so dim. Did we sin or our parents, that we were born blind? In the particular case, who shall say? But except we repent, except atonement be made,



the penalty, the consequence of sin, is on us all. The communion of the love of God which fills all things has somehow been shut out, and all the wickedness and error and pain of the world are the growth from a sinful sowing.

Where then is the remedy? What is the atonement that Christ has wrought? Let us again return to our analogy. The fellowship which the sin of the child has impaired can only be restored by an act of forgiveness on the part of the father. The sinful child cannot sweep away the barrier or bridge the gulf alone. It lies with the father who has been sinned against to forgive, before the restoration can take place. But forgiveness can only be real and effective on certain conditions.

(1) It must cost something to forgive. An easy-going consent to let bygones be bygones is no true forgiveness at all. If the forgiveness really proceed from love, the sin will have caused more pain to the father than to the child, and it will not be easy for him to forgive. He will have suffered for the child's sin, and it is that suffering which gives value to the forgiveness. The power to forgive is not to be ob-



tained for nothing, it must be bought at a price, it must be paid for with the suffering of him who has been sinned against.

“ And Thou didst grant mine asking with a smile,  
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.”

Not so can worthy forgiveness be bestowed.

(2) But again, to turn from the father's part to the child's, forgiveness can only be effective if the child is penitent, *i.e.*, if he is deeply sorry for his sin, because he realises what a horribly evil thing it is. Without such realisation, no forgiveness can take place. External penalties may be remitted, but apart from penitence such remission will only justify the offender in making light of his sin. Moreover, though external penalties be remitted, the inward penalty which is the essential consequence of sin, *viz.*, separation from fellowship, will remain; and the gulf will grow wider in proportion as impunity encourages the sinner to make light of what he has done. Crime would, indeed, be hardly serious, if, as some optimists seem to suppose, it would vanish with the abolition of criminal courts. Unfortunately the chief problem in dealing with a sinner lies in making him

penitent and therefore forgivable.<sup>1</sup> The first stage of the remedy must be to bring him to a knowledge of his sin, that he may repent. Our Lord never urged His followers to forgive any sin apart from some sign of penitence on the sinner's part. "If thy brother repent, forgive him," was His consistent command. Unlike the sentimentalist of to-day who so often invokes His name, He knew that, where there is no penitence, forgiveness has no meaning. The unforgiving temper which Christ condemns is that which fails to recognise and to meet half-way the first feeble impulse of penitence in the offender. The attempt to forgive the impenitent merely effects a confusion between good and evil, a confusion which is the invariable nemesis of sentimentality.

Let us then apply our argument to the forgiveness of man by God, which is the result of the Atonement made by Jesus Christ. In one sense the mere fact of our Lord's Incarnation is itself an atonement. For in His Person He unites God and Man and removes the

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of this whole subject see Dr. Moberly's chapter on Forgiveness in *Atonement and Personality*.

barrier which sin had erected in the way of their communion. But we need an atonement not only in the form of something shown to us, but in the form of something done for us. The language of the Bible repeatedly suggests, and Christian experience has constantly verified, the truth that the Death of Christ was a death for the sins of the world, and that because of the Cross and Passion of our Lord we are somehow forgiven by our Heavenly Father, and delivered from the bondage of sin to be again his children.

Perhaps the analogy we have already sketched may help us to determine in what sense that teaching is true.

(1) The Cross and Passion represent the terrible cost which the Divine Love paid in order to be able to forgive mankind. We are hereby assured that the forgiveness of God is real, just because it was not easy. If God be almighty, why could He not have forgiven man by a fiat which would have cost him nothing? The question will not be asked by one who knows by experience the meaning of real forgiveness. If it is asked, we can only reply that not so would God have commended His love towards us. The oldest theories of the Atone-

ment represent the Cross as a price paid by God to the Devil in order to deliver mankind from his tyranny. It would be a grievous pity, if in superseding the primitive crudity and the legal formalism of the ancient speculations, we were to lose the whole scriptural conception of "price" or "ransom" as interpreting the death of Christ. Every human being who has forgiven a grievous wrong and thereby restored the offender to a fellowship which his sin had forfeited, knows that there is indeed a price of suffering to be paid for the reconciliation. And we may claim our Lord's own authority for saying that not otherwise than we forgive each other, does God Himself forgive us all.

(2) Again from man's point of view, the Divine forgiveness at whatever cost could not be complete apart from the penitence of man. The first step towards penitence is to realise the horror of sin, and it is precisely that horror and that penitence which the preaching of the Cross has awakened in countless souls hardened by sin beyond all hope of human redemption. The Cross in all its ghastliness and shame demonstrates, as nothing else could, not only the love which endured it, but also the

nature and effect of the sin which brought it about. For a soul so redeemed there can be no question of making light of the sin which was the cause of a Saviour's Crucifixion. And the doctrine of the Incarnation enables us to say that the Cross was in a double sense the penalty of human sin. Suffering and death were inflicted by the sin of man, since clearly it was the wickedness of man which brought it all to pass. The Cross is then the penalty of sin, in the sense that one crime is the consequence of another. In the suffering and death inflicted on our Lord human sin found its terrible fulfilment. But also the suffering and death were borne by manhood in the Person of our Lord. The most terrible consequences of sin for a man could not be shown to man, unless they had fallen upon manhood. As we have seen, the worst consequence and the most essential penalty of sin is separation from the communion of the love of God. And we believe that in some mysterious manner beyond our comprehension, our Lord endured even that. The cry, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" marks the culmination of the Atonement. In that utterance is recorded the

true penalty of sin, which the Son of God alone could have strength to bear without perishing eternally.

Old theories of the Atonement have represented Christ's death as a satisfaction for sin. Again there is danger lest the legal or ecclesiastical phrase should obscure for us the essential truth which it only half expresses. It is, of course, repugnant to us to argue as though an offended Deity required a human sacrifice to placate His wrath. Nevertheless even the divinest compassion is no more merciful than just, if it serves to palliate the utter evilness of sin. And how can that evilness be otherwise than palliated and made light of, if the consequences of sin never appear, or are, if the word may be forgiven, really shirked? God's plan of atonement is utterly sincere, it obscures no truth, and evades no consequences, but in revealing the terrible truth to the utmost, it has found a way of escape. It has shown to man what man's sin must bring upon man; yet the result of that revelation is not destruction, since the manhood of Christ was strong enough to bear it unharmed; and all men can through the knowledge of the penalty of sin, if thereby

they be moved to penitence, receive the forgiveness of a Divine mercy which is also righteous and sincere. It was necessary then that Christ should bear the full penalty of sin for all men ; in that sense His death was the satisfaction which man's sin required.

What then is the essential effect of the Atonement ? The death of Christ has shown at once the love of God and the terrible consequences of sin brought upon man. God is therefore able to forgive all men whom that death stirs to penitence, without palliating the sins which brought that death to pass. The barrier which shut men out from fellowship with God, the misunderstandings which shrouded His love from their sight, are gone, if a man will look to Christ and find in Him his penitence and his hope.

Yet here precisely lies the difficulty. How may we find in Christ our penitence and our hope ? So far the reconciliation between Godhead and manhood, which Christ's death has accomplished, seems to lie outside our sinful human lives. It shows us the path to reconciliation, but it does not yet take us along it. *Our* reconciliation to God has become an abstract



possibility perhaps, but it is not yet shown to be an accomplished fact, and unless it be, in some sense, an accomplished fact, a gift which has only to be accepted by us, Christ's Atonement cannot help us, who because of our sinfulness are powerless to help ourselves.

It may be replied that seeing in Christ's death at once the full horror of sin and the Divine Love of God, we may by that spectacle be moved to repent, and it has been shown that through Christ's death God is able to accept that penitence so as to forgive our sin, without exacting from us the full destructive penalty which Christ has borne. Yet we are sinful men, and for that reason our penitence will be half-hearted at the best. Nothing but the full forgiveness of God can restore to us our lost communion with Him; and if full penitence is necessary for full forgiveness our plight is as bad as ever. How can God treat an imperfect penitence as though it were perfect?

Hitherto we have regarded the Atonement simply as a problem in the relation between God and man; we must now deal with it rather as a problem in the relation between



Christ's Manhood and ours. Let us turn at once to St. Paul.

St. Paul's whole preaching of Christ crucified hinges on two cardinal doctrines : (1) the doctrine of the representative or inclusive manhood of Christ, (2) the doctrine of justification by faith. The first of these doctrines we have already alluded to in another context. It was never actually formulated by St. Paul himself, for the abstract phraseology required for its formulation belongs to another age than his. Yet there can be no doubt at all that over and over again in his writings we come across the substance of the doctrine, and to recognise its presence there is essential to the understanding of Pauline thought. Texts like " We were buried with Him through baptism into death," " Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God," and many others, express something more than a mere consciousness of communion between the individual Christian and his risen Lord. They rest upon the fundamental idea that the Death and Resurrection of Christ somehow include much more than the mere historic events which in the first instance they are. In Christ humanity has died and risen,

Christ's Death and Resurrection are facts of a universal human life, which all men may share and all Christ's followers actually have shared. Clearly if we press this teaching, the Atonement wrought by Christ no longer brings to men a mere theoretic possibility of salvation ; it is no longer something accomplished outside their own lives, giving them a chance which they lack power to use. It is something wrought in humanity as a whole, so that any man may claim in union with Christ to have shared His death for sin and have passed through to the resurrection-life of restored fellowship with God.

Yet at first sight this argument seems to prove far too much, and thereby to create more difficulties than it removes. For in point of fact even sincerely Christian men remain sinful and in many ways un-Christ-like. If the acceptance of Christianity were immediately followed by a transformation of the believer into Christ-like perfection, then St. Paul's doctrine would at least receive some support from the evidence. But that is not the case, and we are faced therefore by an ugly dilemma. Either (1) the doctrine

that the believer has taken part in Christ's Atonement must be pronounced a fiction ; or (2) if the Christian's reconciliation with God be indeed an accomplished fact, then it can be accomplished apart from a change of life, and the way is open to the worst excesses of lax morality excused by an appeal to " faith."

But it is precisely this dilemma which St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith is designed to meet. St. Paul himself never defined faith ; the definition was left for the greatest of his disciples, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. " Faith is the substance of things hoped for," that is, translated into the cumbrous jargon of modern speech, faith is the means whereby we reach towards and realise in the present a consummation which is to be fulfilled in the future. The faith by which we embrace Christ is essentially such an effort of anticipation. In one sense when we first believe, we are not Christ-like, we are not in Christ, we have not yet died to sin, nor risen again to the life of perfect communion with God. Yet we have taken Christ for our Master, we have set forth

to follow Him, we believe that we may and shall be made more and more perfectly partakers of His Death and Resurrection-life. Because the Manhood of Christ is inclusive or representative of ours, we may be one with Christ, while yet we are sinners, by the anticipation of faith, which is the substance of things hoped for. That faith is the spring of penitence. For when we believe ourselves in Christ to be capable of becoming children of God, then and not till then can we be penitent about our failure to behave like children of God. There can be no true penitence without the hope of faith ; but the moment we have that hope, penitence is ours too ; for it is as it were the reverse side of the act whereby faith bridges the gulf of time and reaches forward to the consummation that shall be.

And in answer to that penitent faith, which, imperfect as it is, is nevertheless the earnest of what in Christ we are becoming, God justifies us—that is, He reckons us and treats us as already one with Christ and in Christ, so that by the power of Christ's Atonement the barrier between us and God is swept away, our sin is forgiven, and the Divine fellowship, which can

only properly be bestowed on those who are Christ-like, is restored to us already. Ideally this new beginning takes place once for all, as soon as by the initial act of faith, sealed in baptism, we have accepted Christ. Actually it takes place again and again; it has to be renewed as often as we fall back into sin. But since the Atonement of Christ includes all humanity, it is sufficient for all our sins. As often as we repent, renew our allegiance to the Master we have betrayed, and identify ourselves with Him by a fresh act of faith, so often God renews His forgiveness, His justification,<sup>1</sup> until at length we become in deed and in truth members of Christ and children of God in His eternal Kingdom.

The abstract and unfamiliar language in which St. Paul's doctrine of justification is

<sup>1</sup> Justification may almost be called the Pauline equivalent for forgiveness. Forgiveness is void, unless it restores to fellowship, and that restoration is exactly what St. Paul means by the justification (the "being treated as righteous") which is bestowed in answer to faith. St. Paul doubtless avoided the word "forgiveness," because it would emphasise the negative remission of penalty instead of the positive restoration to fellowship. In the same way faith represents the positive movement towards a goal, penitence the negative movement away from evil, both being essentially included in one act.

couched has disastrously obscured the intensely practical simplicity of its essential meaning. St. Paul's language is the product of his age and training ; his meaning is catholic in its application and eternal in its truth. Let us take an illustration which will bring out this fact by the force of a complete external contrast. Generations of mothers, nurses and governesses, since the world began, have learned and verified the lesson that the wavering self-control of a child, which suffers complete breakdown if he is told "not to be a baby," may be stimulated to further effort if he is told "to be a man." Why ? Because the mention of manhood makes appeal to the child's faith, which is for him the substance of things hoped for. It is his proud belief that he is capable of manhood, and, when that faith is stirred, there is at least some chance that forgetting those things that are behind and reaching out to those things that are before, he will press toward the mark for the prize of that high calling (to him how pathetically high !) which he feels dimly to be his. All those who have had any experience of dealing with the young

know well the need of responding to such faith. No method of treating a child is more effective for good, when wisely used, than the method of trusting him, or putting him on his honour—in other words, the method of treating him as the trustworthy man which he feels he has it in him to be. To a superficial view this method may seem to involve an element of fiction or make-believe, yet it is a fiction and make-believe born of a profounder insight into the truth. Even the weak-willed child has the germs of honour and manliness within him, and by giving him credit for his possibilities we make them actual; we do not, of course, put into him any alien virtue from without, but we elicit something which was really his, but needed our trust to draw it forth. Now in thus treating a child we do essentially justify him by his faith. He believes in his capacity for manliness, and therefore we treat him as a man in order that he may become one. Not wholly otherwise, according to St. Paul's doctrine, does the Heavenly Father justify all His human children. True, there is one important difference. The child's faith, in



the illustration we are taking, is a faith mainly in a power or capacity of his own, the Christian's faith is a faith in Christ's power to make His followers like to Himself. Yet ideally at least Christ's manhood is ours also—at any rate, Christ has put it into our manhood to become one with His; and if we have the faith to reach out after that union, the Love of God, which knows our possibilities no less than our short-comings, has no need of fiction in order to treat us as what in Christ we may become. For in Christ manhood has died to sin and for sin, and therefore the highest and strongest of all appeals can be made at once to any man whose faith will claim membership in Him—"Ye are dead; your life is hid with Christ in God; *therefore* seek those things which are above." As St. Paul clearly perceived, the Law was powerless, because it made appeal to man on the ground of what he was not. It told him that he was a sinner in the same breath that it exhorted him to be a saint; just as our more modern ethics of evolution tell man that he is an ape, while they may, or may not, exhort him to be an angel. But the Gospel



of the Atonement appeals to man on the ground of what he is: "You are in Christ, you are God's adopted child, you are restored to fellowship; therefore behave yourself worthily of that gift." Thus, in the old words of the woman of Tekoa, has God devised means whereby His banished be not outcast from Him.

Let us in conclusion summarise a somewhat tortuous and complex argument. Sin we defined as the rejection of the love of God, which inevitably leads to a separation from fellowship with Him. The problem of atonement is the problem of how God may forgive the sin of man, so that the lost fellowship may be restored. Mere remission of the penalty of sin is useless, for it cannot of itself restore fellowship; rather, it defeats that end by palliating the sin and making it appear as other than fatally evil. Forgiveness can only be real and restorative, (1) if it cost the forgiver something and thereby demonstrate his love; (2) if the sinner thereby see the horror of his sin, so that he be moved to penitence and the endeavour to amend. The Crucifixion of our Lord, viewed as God's act in manhood

fulfils the first condition, and makes the fulfilment of the second possible. For in Christ's death the sinner sees not only God's love but also the full penalty of sin for man, which, had he endured it himself, would have destroyed him; and he may thereby be moved to penitence, so that he may obtain forgiveness.

At this point, however, we found ourselves compelled to press our enquiry further as to the meaning of this latter possibility. Penitence is a difficult achievement and in a sinner will be imperfect. How does Christ's Atonement put reconciliation to God actually within the sinner's reach as a gift which he has but to accept? This question can only be answered in the light of the Pauline doctrines of Christ's representative Manhood and of man's justification by faith. The first teaches that ideally Christ's Manhood includes ours, so that under the reconciliation between God and manhood which Christ accomplished all men are potentially covered. All have paid the penalty, all are restored. The second doctrine teaches how the ideal union between Christ's Manhood and ours, already in a

sense existing, may be realised by us. Faith is that by which we reach out in advance to that ideal union. The initial act of penitent faith, which, however imperfectly, takes Christ as its Lord and end, is the earnest of our full union with Him, which, though already real, has to be made actual and operative in us. In answer to that faith God treats us as already in Christ, restores us to His fellowship and thereby enables us to become in the end perfectly His children.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHRIST THE REDEEMER — (B) THE JUDGEMENT

THE Last Judgement is not the most popular part of the Christian faith at the present time. The older school of preaching which constantly kept the fires of Hell before the eyes of its congregation has practically died out. The subject of the Judgement is very generally shirked in the pulpit. By unbelievers it is made a target for rather obvious sarcasm, and the main body of the Church follows its habitual practice of making a difficult and unpalatable truth as inconspicuous as possible, in the hope that it will cease to attract attention.

On the other hand, we have with us an increasing conservative minority, which is always accusing its less truculent brethren of running away from their principles, in

order to propitiate an idol which they call the modern mind. This minority would bid us pay but scant attention to modern difficulties on this subject. Those difficulties, it would say, are due to the sentimentality which dislikes facing unpleasant facts, and insists upon confounding the Divine Goodness with good nature ; or else they are the product of that science, falsely so-called, which tries to prove that all wrong-doing is simply the result of "conditions," that nothing is anyone's fault, and that there is practically no such thing as genuine sin. The party of "the extreme right" would tell us that the Church must not yield an inch to such new-fangled and muddle-headed ideas. Her teachers should make no attempt to conform their doctrine to what the modern mind likes to hear, to speak smooth things and prophesy deceits, or, in the words of a less ancient and less venerable prophet, to consider "how much Jones will swallow."<sup>1</sup> They should simply insist uncompromisingly on the old

<sup>1</sup> From Mr. R. A. Knox's *Loose Stones*. In its original context the phrase has no immediate reference to the doctrine of the Judgement.

doctrine of God's terrible punishment of sin. If they will only proclaim with clear and certain voice all the old terrors of the Day of Judgement, the modern man will in time discover the futility of his attempt to evade the fact of sin, and will return to the teachers who have never sought to evade it.

No doubt there is more than a little truth in these contentions of the ultra-orthodox. It can hardly be denied that our age has tried to gloze over the unpleasant reality of sin and of the retribution which it must draw down upon itself. Much that passes for liberalism and breadth of mind is little more than a sentimental endeavour to palliate error and evil, and to make out that they are not so very bad after all. There has been a tendency to dwell on phrases about the goodness and mercy of God, when the quality in reality praised is the tolerance which belongs to an unexacting good-nature. The lines :

“ They talk of some strict testing of us—Pish !  
He's a good fellow and 'twill all be well,”

represent a frame of mind by no means

confined to the talking pots of Omar Khayyám's fancy. Moreover it is certainly true that much science—especially the young science of psychology—has tended in its explanations to substitute disease or the influence of environment for sinfulness as the real cause of wrong-doing.

Yet surely these considerations, however true, cannot wholly satisfy us as a solution of our difficulties in believing old-fashioned doctrines about the Divine Judgement upon sin. It is a very real as well as a very ancient problem which the Psalms try to face, when they dwell on the fact that on earth the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice are at least not always apparent. It is useless to point to certain cases, in which the counsels of the wicked have been brought to nought apparently by special interposition of Divine Providence. It is not enough to bring forward classes of cases in which wrong-doing seems to entail disaster by a regular sequence of cause and effect. The fact remains that on earth there is no general rule that the punishment fits the crime, outside the world of the romantic novel or the Drury Lane melo-

drama. And the critics are right in drawing attention to the unsatisfactoriness of any solution which simply postpones the final reckoning *sine die*, or rather to an infinitely distant day beyond the grave, when the wicked will be consigned to everlasting flames, and the righteous received into the final joys of heaven.

Three difficulties remain which older theories of the Judgement do not adequately meet.

(1) We require an assurance that we need not believe in a vindictive God, *i.e.*, a God Who simply requites on the principles of the Mosaic Law. Such a system of rewards and penalties is essentially a makeshift human method, which cannot possibly be harmonised with an ideal of Divine Justice and Mercy.

(2) The Mosaic system of rewards and penalties does seem to appeal to us now to avoid evil and do good from motives which are somewhat lower than the highest. The question, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" may come from the Evil One, but even Satan's questions may sometimes demand an answer.

(3) Above all, we need to understand rather



better the relation to our present experience of belief in a future Judgement. It is always bad argument to appeal to the future *merely* on the ground that it is unknown and may change everything. Such appeals are as incapable of support as they are of refutation; they simply bring discussion to an end. We require to see how far our *present* experience can justify us in concluding that “verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God which judgeth the earth.”

Perhaps we may find some real help in examining the full significance of the word Judgement. The very commonness of the word gives it a perplexing variety of usage, and in its theological connection we are apt to miss the full force of its meaning by confining it to one special sense.

Usually when we speak of the Judgement of God we naturally derive our ideas on the subject from a human court of justice. But even so it must be noticed that the word judgement may cover two distinct acts of the judge assisted by the jury. The judgement proper is simply a statement as to the facts and merits of the case which is being judged

In a criminal case we call it the verdict, which simply states whether the prisoner is or is not guilty of the charge brought against him. It may be followed by some further remark modifying the degree of his guilt. In any case it states the result of the trial which has discriminated the facts of the case, attached to them their true value, and brought to light thereby the prisoner's innocence or guilt. But we habitually include under the word "judgement" what is quite a distinct act, viz., the fixing of the penalty, which in a criminal case is called the sentence. In civil cases judgement proper and fixing of penalty are combined in the "judgement," but always the fixing of penalty remains distinct as a consequence of the judgement proper rather than the judgement itself. The judgement would be incomplete, yet it would remain a judgement, even if no penalty were fixed or executed.

There remains the much wider sense in which the word "judgement" is used. Every time we state our opinion about anything we deliver a judgement. We judge things to be beautiful or ugly, true or false, right

or wrong, useful or useless, pleasant or painful. In every case our judgement is a statement about the merits of some case ; by it we attach a certain value of good or evil to something in our experience, whether it is a work of art, an opinion, an action, an instrument we use, or a sensation we undergo. And always our judgement is the result of some process of reflection, whereby we classify and discriminate our experience, separate in it good from evil, and pronounce this to be good as distinct from bad, and that to be bad as distinct from good. Some judgements are very easily and quickly made. It does not require much thought to determine that a toothache is painful and in so far to set it on the bad side of the account. Other judgements require a great deal of laborious thinking out, and we are in much perplexity before we can affirm them. But all judgements in their degree presuppose some process of discrimination, a separating good from bad in our experience, so that the proper value may be assigned to each. And so we speak of people of discriminating judgement, meaning thereby people who are

good at disentangling good from bad and truth from error in this perplexing mixture of a world, people who are able to penetrate to the soul of goodness in things evil as well as to expose a sham, and therefore are better able than their neighbours to see things in their true colours.

So far, then, we can trace a clear analogy between the meanings of the word "judgement" in its legal and in its general sense. All judgement gives the result of a process of discrimination whereby we separate good from evil and assign a corresponding value to what we have under consideration.

We have already seen that in the law court the judgement proper leads on to the assigning of the penalty, where any guilt has been established. Have our general judgements any consequence which we might compare with the sentence of a law court? At first sight we should probably say no, but further reflection induces us to reverse the answer. For we find that ordinary judgements, though they are expressions of opinion, are not expressions of opinion only. They all tend to have, and are meant to have, a definite

result in guiding action. When we have judged a thing to be good, we tend to accept or to follow it, or at least to mark in some way by our action the approval which our opinion has expressed. In the case of a pleasant feeling we try to feel it again ; in the case of a true statement, we tend to affirm and support it in argument ; in the case of a right action, we try to do it ourselves or encourage another to do it. Similarly, whenever we judge a thing to be bad, we tend to reject or avoid it, or in some way to separate ourselves therefrom. No doubt there are obvious exceptions, but they turn out to be just those which, in the logical sense, test and establish the rule. For instance, a man may sin with full deliberation—*i.e.*, he may judge a thing to be wrong and then for that very reason do it. But in that case he has practically said, “ Evil be thou my good.” He has deliberately confused the distinction between good and evil which his previous judgement made. He has lied to himself, and if he goes on acting the lie, he will be unable in the end even to know the truth. Such a case only illustrates the general truth that our judge-

ments must tend to produce in us corresponding action.

And if we are right so far, we can see more clearly why it is that the judgement in a law court seems to involve the fixing of some penalty as its natural consequence. In such a judgement the State, by the mouth of judge or jury, discriminates a certain act as evil and expresses disapproval thereof. For that very reason the State must express and mark its condemnation by some form of action; otherwise the judgement would remain incomplete as a mere ineffective expression of opinion without force or practical significance. Of course many different considerations must enter into the judge's mind in determining the severity of the sentence, but, apart from the question of degree, the fact that some penalty or other is a necessary consequence of the judgement, depends at bottom on the necessity that all effective judgement should express itself in action of some kind. No doubt in a court of law the sentence and its execution do not follow on the judgement with the same inevitable sequence with which our personal actions

follow our personal judgements. For the State is not a living personality in the same sense in which an individual is, and therefore its actions do not follow its opinions with the same continuity which belongs to personal life. Perhaps again in a more highly developed state it might be left to the mere force of public opinion to give effect to the judgement, and then no formal sentence would be required. But the principle remains that it is impossible without moral falsehood to judge a thing to be evil, and then simply to leave the situation as it is. Some action must follow with the aim of putting away and rejecting what has fallen under the condemnation.

We come at length to the religious associations of the word "judgement." Clearly the Last Judgement of God must represent a final and complete discrimination between good and evil. Much confusion has arisen in the popular mind because of the tendency to confine the religious use of the word "judgement" to what is more properly the last stage of judgement—that is, the sentence and its execution. The whole subject is seen in a much clearer light, when once we have



realised that the judgement of God, like all judgement, includes three distinct stages. First comes the progressive discrimination between good and evil in the world, corresponding to the trial in the law court. Secondly, there is the formal declaration or pronouncement as to the result of this process, corresponding to the verdict. Thirdly, there is the necessary action to which the verdict leads, corresponding to the sentence. The distinction between these three stages is clearly implied in our Lord's great parables of judgement, the Wheat and the Tares and the Sheep and the Goats, though in each one stage is more or less passed over. The first stage is represented by the progress in discrimination between wheat and tares, as their growth makes apparent the distinct nature of each. In the parable of the Sheep and Goats the discrimination is assumed to start with. The second stage is represented by the formal judgement passed on the sheep and the goats. The different imagery of the wheat and the tares suffers this stage to remain implicit. The third stage is represented by the words, "Bind the tares in



bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn," and "Come ye blessed of my Father. . . . Depart from me ye wicked."

In this analysis of the idea of judgement we can at least find some help in meeting the three difficulties from which our discussion started.

(1) All suspicion that we are called upon to believe in a vindictive God will disappear, and a way lies open for the reconciliation of the Divine Justice with the Divine Mercy. The sentences "Come ye blessed . . ." "Depart from me ye wicked . . ." represent no arbitrary award of happiness which need not be bestowed, or of punishment which need not be inflicted. Once the discrimination is final and complete, God could not act otherwise without reversing His own judgement and contradicting His own nature. Divine mercy and forgiveness, on the other hand, are shown while our nature is still a perplexing mixture, while the discrimination of good and evil in the world is still incomplete, or at least not fully apparent. The mercy of God helps us to see the exceeding evilness of sin and gives us power to cast

it from us, while the trial of the world is still in progress, while we are still in a state of growth and development, here and perhaps beyond the grave. But the mercy of God cannot mean that He will tolerate evil or behave as though it did not matter. For those who persist in evil to the end, there can be but one sentence, "Depart from Me." Judgement visions like those of the Revelation are difficult to interpret, not because they show no mercy to evil, but because they assume a complete discrimination between the evil and the good, which on our present earth is not really found.

(2) Again, the teaching about the Final Day, when the wicked would be everlastingly punished and the good rewarded, seemed to appeal to us to be good from motives not quite of the highest kind. This idea is now seen to rest on a confusion of thought. For in the Final Judgement the complete separation of good from evil is assumed. All low motives, any selfish attempts to propitiate the Divine favour will appear in their true colours and be banished for ever from the Divine Presence. No life that has not its

mainspring in the perfect unselfishness of Christ can possibly stand the test of that Day or be fit to inherit the eternal Kingdom.

(3) The last of our difficulties, however, is by far the most serious and important. Have we any evidence in our experience which supports our belief that God will finally judge the world? How can we affirm that the judgement of the Last Day is the completion of a process which has already begun in the world as we know it? How can we appeal to the future with a reasonable faith that it will fulfil the present, not merely in the blind hope that it may reverse it?

Here surely our analysis of the different stages does suggest a philosophy of history, partial no doubt, but, so far as it goes, capable of explaining a wide range of otherwise perplexing facts. The parable of the Wheat and the Tares may suggest a religious view of evolution which is needed to supplement and correct scientific theories.

It is a strange but undeniable fact that evil seems to have come into the world almost with the first origin of life. We cannot say that the material world before the birth of

life upon it was anything but good. We can imagine the perspective of the heavens, the solemn grandeur of mountain, sea and desert, as rejoicing in their beauty the Mind of their Creator. But almost from the moment that life appears, we find it very difficult to call the world wholly and without qualification good. As God made it and meant it to be, we believe that it is all very good, but even from the earliest stages strange seeds of corruption seem to have crept in. When we consider the life of nature before man appeared, amid all the goodness of new and glorious birth, we find traces of something which it is hard not to attribute to the Evil One. When we think of the mutual destructiveness of the earliest phase of the struggle for existence, however much it may be palliated by its unconsciousness, we cannot but see the germs of evil already at work, inextricably mingled with the good. There is no guilt as yet, but there is evil which seems to be the result as well as the foreshadowing of sin. Our Lord's words come back inevitably to the mind—"An enemy hath done this."

And with the higher forms of animal life,

still before man appears, we seem to catch already the dim foreshadowing of two ideals, two purposes in life, out of the mutual conflict of which the subsequent history of life in the world has been evolved. On the evil side there is the predatory instinct, the life which supports itself by preying upon others, the life which lives that others may die. On the good side there is the parental instinct, the life which will suffer to shield its young ones, the life which is willing to die that others may live. The two instincts are inextricably intermingled. We cannot separate the tares from the wheat. Both instincts seem to have played their part in the development of life into higher forms. Yet the conflict is there, fierce and unmistakable, and the possibility of progress has been due to the fact that the one instinct has on the whole over-ruled the other, the parental instinct has held the predatory in check. Is it altogether fanciful to suggest that even here we find dim fore-shadowings of a predatory Kingdom, a Kingdom of the Devil, at war in the world with the Kingdom of self-sacrifice, the Kingdom of Christ? Is the subsequent history of

the world the history of a more and more clearly defined and intensified struggle between those two opposing forces ?

The fancy seems to provide a truer view of evolution than that which often does duty in books on the philosophy of science. Certainly, so far as we can tell, the progress of human history has not been towards the absorption or elimination of evil, but towards its greater distinction, towards the heightening and intensifying of the contrast between evil and good. Popular theories of evolution have often taught that sin really means nothing more than a persistence in man of instincts originally belonging to lower forms of life, instincts not really evil in themselves, but as yet insufficiently adapted to the more spiritual atmosphere which man has succeeded in reaching. It has been confidently asserted that in the continuous course of natural progress these lower instincts are being gradually absorbed and assimilated by the higher, so that we may look forward with complacent confidence to the time when man's whole nature must by natural laws achieve a perfect adaptation to his highest requirements. Sin

is only a case of incomplete adaptation, only one stage in a uniform growth, only, as it were, a growing-pain of man's moral nature.

The theory has undoubted attraction, but we are waking up to the fact that there is really no evidence in its favour. It flourished in the artificial atmosphere of Victorianism, but cannot survive the breath of reality. Facing the facts of the situation we cannot say that evil and sin have been tending to disappear at all. Perhaps under the external peace imposed by the development of commerce—the peace of Dives, as Kipling has called it—some of the uglier vices of mankind took on a more hypocritical and less frankly brutal aspect. But to-day our awakening is a rude one. The devils have again broken loose. The progress of civilisation seems to have been largely a progress in the invention of more effective instruments for mutual torture and destruction. Surely one result of the awful exhibition must be that popular theories of evolutionary progress will at least undergo revision.

The question is becoming insistent. Must we despair of all general progress and improve-



ment in this world ? And it is tempting to reply that Christianity has already despaired of this world, and that is the reason why it looks so earnestly for the life of the world to come. Neither our Lord in his eschatological warnings, nor St. Paul with his prediction of the man of sin, nor St. John in his Apocalypse, has encouraged us to suppose that in the normal process of history evil will ever be cast out or finally overcome. For that consummation we must look to the coming of a new world which will only be accomplished in the passing of this one. Yet such an answer will not convey the whole truth. Looking squarely at history we can indeed trace a very real progress of a certain kind – a progress in the intensification of the contrast and the strife between good and evil, whereby good and evil are ever more clearly seen in their true colours, the good appearing ever more divine and the evil ever more devilish. The time for the separation of wheat from tares is not yet ; but at least the distinction between them is becoming plainer as their growth matures.

A great stage in this progress was begun



with the creation of man and has been continued throughout human history. The predatory instinct and the evil animal passions still persist in man. They show no sign of weakening as time goes on ; they only take to themselves new and more complex forms. But they do appear as increasingly evil. What in the animal was only natural, appears in the savage as brutal, and in civilised man as devilish. And it appears devilish precisely in contrast and in conflict with the higher human nature which carries on the parental instinct of the animal, and develops it into human self-sacrifice and love. Here, too, on the good side, what was in the animal only natural, develops in man into something Christlike. As the evil in our world is progressively revealed, so too our Christian ideal is becoming ever more sharply defined, and we gain a firmer grasp of what Christianity does and ought to mean. It is quite true that the present war represents in some ways an uglier exhibition of evil than, so far as we can tell, the world has yet seen ; yet there is a real advance in the very fact that never before has war and all that war involves,

appeared so detestable, so loathsome. In the Middle Ages, for instance, war was part of the normal course of events. It was lightly undertaken; no one felt much horror at it; no one worried about its incompatibility with the Christian gospel. John of Salisbury seriously propounded the scholastic question, whether it were possible for an archdeacon to be saved; but no similar problem seems to have arisen in regard to the soldier. War was simply accepted, and to a great extent enjoyed. Two years ago, however, we saw and felt the great object-lesson of an Empire embarking on war with reluctance and loathing, because that seemed the only course to take. No one wanted to fight; and every added horror which the months bring forth only makes us ask ourselves with deeper searchings of heart, How can such things go on in a world where Christ has been revealed? We look forward with an ever more passionate longing to a peace which shall not be built on the sands of commercial interest, and cannot be upset by the crazy lust of a military clique. Be as pessimistic as you will about the future of civilisation in the world, you

cannot escape the fact that the war has helped us to define and interpret our Christianity. We know more about the peace of Christ now than we did two years ago.

In other words, the progress of the world is a progress in judgement. For the essence of judgement lies in discrimination, and the first stage of the judgement of God must reveal to us the evil of the world in its true colours, make us realise the guilt and power of sin, and the appalling sataninity of the Devil.

From this point of view, the greatest judgement the world has ever known was the coming into it of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that He shall come again in glory to judge both the quick and the dead. But that belief receives its present evidence from the fact that in a very definite sense He has begun to judge the world already. He has made men see the reality and horror of sin as they never did before. The shining of the Light of the World has made the shadows blacker. And all human lives which are brought into contact with that revelation are visibly discriminated and judged, according

as they accept and try to follow, or else despise and reject it. For judgement our Lord is come into the world; and he that believeth not is judged already. That is the truth which St. John saw so clearly and stated with such uncompromising force.

The judgement is more strongly marked as time goes on. In this present cataclysm God has indeed brought His judgement upon all the world. For by it the lurking forces of evil hidden under the specious externals of our civilisation have been driven out into the open. They have come out upon the surface of our world, just as the rash from a latent disease comes out upon the surface of the body. Our civilisation had been acting on wrong principles which bred fatal disease-germs in its system. Commerce, for instance, was largely organised on the principle of the strong taking all he can get, and the weak going to the wall. Success became an idol, and "Get on or get out" a motto, while respectable people remarked that business was business, and shut their eyes to the working of the poison. The nations were

prevented from flying at each other's throats by the complicated interests involved ; and our prophets cried "Peace" where there was no peace. We succeeded in ignoring the ominously growing armaments, and we almost persuaded ourselves, when we watched an international tennis match, that we were really advancing towards a fellowship of the nations. But now the effects of the poison have come out. We have seen the gospel of success, the motto "Get on or get out," the right of the strong to trample the weak, acted on and carried to their logical conclusion in the villages of Belgium and Armenia. We have seen those principles in all their nakedness, in all their terrible hostility to the gospel of Christ. And by that vision we know that they are judged, and to a great extent our civilisation with them. We know that God judges those principles of action to be evil, and evil they will remain ; and though they were to sweep the earth in a victorious career, they would only bring on themselves a more effectual damnation. We know that they are evil, because we have known Christ.

Knowing then that they are judged already, we can wait with patience for the time when final sentence shall be passed.

For the end is not yet. The growth into complete distinction of wheat and tares is the result of an age-long conflict, which probably has hardly yet passed its earliest stages. Our modern world holds in solution mingled possibilities of good and evil, which it will take many centuries to discriminate and to discern. It is the life of Christ which will effect that discrimination and discernment, but we cannot predict the manner of its operation. At times we seem to see partial anticipations of the final sentence of God, when evil is not only exposed but also to some extent conquered and cast forth, and the world does seem to have taken one step upward toward the throne of God. And at other times some fresh form of sin reveals its malignant power, and we are driven back upon the thought that it was through an outward failure that the greatest victory of good was won. But alike through outward failure and success the process of judgement is sure. God does not change His Nature, and His

Kingdom, whether earth accept or reject its rule, abides eternal in the heaven where is the everlasting citizenship of its subjects.

## NOTE A

### ON THE IMMINENCE OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT

IT must not be forgotten that though the final sentence of God is the distant goal of all history, nevertheless, as the expression of His Nature, it is also eternally present and unchanging. The eternal, though the fulfilment of its revelation to us is future, is nevertheless always being partially and progressively revealed now in the process of time. The final "Day" is being anticipated in a series of partial "Days" which point forward towards it. The difficulty of grasping the truth which underlies this idea lies in the impossibility of adequately conceiving under the forms of a time-limited intelligence the relation of the eternal to the temporal. The relation of the eternal sentence of God to the temporal sequence of events can never be adequately



expressed as the relation of something simply future to something simply present ; for the eternal is always in a sense present. The relation in question is perhaps best expressed to our finite minds as a relation of perpetual imminence. The final sentence upon the whole time-process of history is, in time, remotely distant. But to each generation and to each individual the final sentence upon itself is come very near. There is no time to lose for anyone who would escape its doom. Every repentance is a repentance at the eleventh hour. To each individual and generation the sentence is still future, in that repentance is still possible ; it is imminent, in that repentance must imperatively be immediate. That is the great moral which our Lord Himself draws from His prophecies of the near coming of the Son of Man. It is as reminders of this truth that the sudden destructions, which come upon men unawares, are rightly called, in a sense, Divine Judgements. We may be sure that, for all our impatience, we have not yet reached the depths of truth in our Lord's warning of the present imminence of the Divine



Sentence upon those among whom he lived and taught. "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Judah, before the Son of Man be come." The words are true for each successive generation of men, however difficult may be their metaphysical interpretation.

Nowadays the belief is almost universally accepted among Christians that between death and final judgement there will intervene some "intermediate state," wherein either through the trials of purgatory or in the calm of Paradise the imperfect soul will have opportunity of completing its growth. We may rightly base the doctrine on inference from Scripture supported by the commonsense of the Christian conscience. But we must not forget that as to the nature of this intermediate state the Bible tells us almost nothing, and the belief in it becomes highly dangerous the moment we are led to depreciate or put in the background the intensely *critical* character of this present life. There is no reason for the assumption, often tacitly made, that after death the time-process (if such there

must be), in which the soul will find itself, must run exactly parallel with the time-process of the history of the world which the soul has left. We know that events which occupy hours in a dream may be represented only by a few seconds in the time of our waking world. What if the time-process of this world stands to the time-process of the "intermediate state" in somewhat the same relation as that which the time of the dream-world bears to what we normally call "real" time? Metaphysically speaking there is, so far, no reason why the final sentence should not fall more or less "at once" upon each soul that crosses behind the veil, and yet in its arrival at the final Judgement that soul might not anticipate any other born after it up to the end of history.<sup>1</sup> Speaking

<sup>1</sup> Suppose that two people are together dreaming the same dream, and, what seems in the dream to be an hour, corresponds in fact to one second of "real" time. Suppose one of the dreamers after dreaming half the dream (*i.e.*, after dreaming what seems to occupy half an hour) wakes up and leaves the other still going on with the dream. The interval between the time when the first dreamer wakes and the time when the second dreamer wakes will seem to the second dreamer half an hour; to the first dreamer, who has awakened, it will be half a second. What if those who

as Christians, we hope and believe that some opportunity of growth will be allowed to every soul, which, as far as we can tell, departs full of imperfections into the unknown. Such opportunity, we feel, demands time, for time is that by which we measure development and change. But of the relation of that other time to ours we know simply nothing, and meanwhile it is utterly dangerous in our own case to build on the possibilities of an intermediate state which our Lord has left unrevealed, and to neglect His express warning that the Son of Man cometh suddenly, in an hour when we think not.

have passed behind the veil stand to us in the same relation as the awakened dreamer to him who is still dreaming? A thousand years of this world's dream-life may, for all we know, be really as one second in their more real time-process. Again, what bearing would this analogy have in the problem of communication with the departed? A man who is awake cannot communicate (or at least can only communicate very imperfectly) with a man who is dreaming, unless he first wakes him up. Now, if the waking up corresponds to physical death, it will be correspondingly impossible for the departed to communicate with us, unless we first die.

## NOTE B

## ON FUTURE JUDGEMENT AND PRESENT CONDUCT

THE view of judgement suggested in the preceding chapter raises an urgent practical question<sup>1</sup> which cannot be altogether passed over in silence. If it is true, at once that this life is so intensely critical, and yet that in it good and evil are still so inextricably intermingled, how shall we discriminate between them for the practical purposes of action? The war has recently forced this question upon us in a manner which makes evasion impossible. How can it be right for the Christian who desires to keep himself wholly on Christ's side to go forth and slay his fellow-men? On the other hand, how can it be right for him to stand by in comfortable inaction while the weak whom he was pledged to support are massacred and oppressed, and the laws of national righteousness are trampled underfoot? There

<sup>1</sup> We shall return to the same problem by another route in Chapter VIII.

seems to be no escape from the dilemma. But we may recognise that the particular difficulty is only an acute form of a problem which is essentially chronic. The problem in one form or another confronts not only the Christian who enlists but the Christian who has any dealings at all with the organised life of this world. An obvious case is that of the Christian who becomes part of a system of competitive commerce. Apart from all question of downright dishonesty, he must at least compete with others for the custom of the buyer, he must seek to draw customers from others to himself, and in so doing he must employ methods of self-advertisement and self-assertion. Consider the posters which flaunt themselves on every hoarding. They are a necessary part of the whole system on which our commerce is organised, yet it is impossible to contend that they are wholly and in every sense consistent with the full Christian ideal of unselfishness and self-sacrifice. Their whole *raison d'être* is to depict the producers and consumers of certain articles in a state of self-satisfaction usually fatuous, always supreme. Yet if the Christian

were to refuse to take any share in a system which must produce such ethical monstrosities, not only would he fail to support those dependent on him, but commerce itself would lose the only influence capable of reforming it. Every Christian in so far as he takes his Christianity into the commercial world hastens the time when "business" will be a more Christian business than it is at present, the time, that is, when it will be really organised for the mutual service of mankind.

Moreover the Christian, if he refuse to take any part in commerce or in war, cannot escape the fact that he must, if he live at all, live on what is produced and safeguarded to his use by the very methods of competition and coercion which he condemns. The ideal conscientious objector irresistibly recalls to the student of *Alice through the Looking-Glass* the unhappy bread-and-butter-fly, which rejected the only means of subsistence which its world afforded.

The truth is that with wheat and tares so terribly intermingled as they are, it is impossible so to discriminate between them in action that the Christian ideal may find

pure and perfect outward expression in our every act. This conclusion does not imply that we can acquiesce in any standard of action lower than the absolutely highest, or that Christian principles have been rendered in any sense inapplicable by the sins of the world. Where were Christian principles meant to be applied if not among sinful men? But we must recognise that our expression in act of these principles must be limited by actual possibilities. We can but try to do the most Christian action open to us in the circumstances. The Church at various times, notably in some forms of monasticism, has tried to produce within itself artificial conditions, where a certain section of its members might be able to give more outwardly complete expression to their faith than is possible for those living "in the world." Such attempts are not without very genuine religious value, but the existence of such communities is only made possible by the fact that the majority do not belong to them. Of necessity they must be limited to the few, and even so they can only very partially express the Gospel which comes to consecrate



all human life in the service of God. They cannot solve the main problem of Christian conduct in a sinful world.

Once, only once, and once for all has the full ideal of Christianity received an outwardly perfect embodiment upon earth. The brief years of our Lord's life in the flesh perfectly expressed a perfect manhood, in circumstances specially chosen and ordained by God's Providence for the purpose of that revelation. That perfect manhood has ascended now to Heaven. In one sense it has quitted the earth. Yet where is Heaven? Not only in a period remotely future, not only in a place remotely distant, Heaven is the spiritual sphere wherein God dwells eternally, and that heaven may be literally in men's souls, in so far as they are the habitation of His Spirit. It is man's task to pray that Christ may reign within him, that Christ's Spirit of self-sacrifice and service may be the mainspring of all his actions. He will not be able to give the Christ within him a perfect expression in act, but he can so act by God's help as to express Christ's Spirit in the best way his own imperfections



and the force of sinful circumstances will permit. In acting thus he does up to the measure of his capacity give his allegiance to the cause of the Kingdom of God in its strife against the Kingdom of the Evil One. He is hastening on the perfect coming of the Kingdom to which the inward vision of his spirit reaches out by faith. He knows that as the strife becomes fiercer, the wheat and the tares will appear in ever clearer distinction, the two Kingdoms will stand out in ever more visible opposition, and the final day of the Lord will be at hand.

## CHAPTER V

### CHRIST THE REDEEMER — (C) THE RESURRECTION

WE have sketched the general meaning of two of the three great doctrines of Redemption, the opportunity of the Atonement, the warning of the Judgement. We come last to the hope of the Resurrection, and at once we find ourselves in the presence of Death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, and of the multifarious brood of mental and physical sufferings, of which death may be taken as the parent or the type. We have already said something about the connection that exists between pain and death and evil in general. The essential nature of evil is sin, and it is because of their apparently sinful nature that pain and death seem to be so evil. This is especially the case where the innocent suffer, inasmuch as such suffering

appears to be peculiarly cruel. Yet pain and death are the lot of all earthly life, without distinction. How can we begin to reconcile their existence with the love of God ?

Clearly we must start with sin as the source of all evil. Sin we have defined as the rejection of the communion of God's love. Its fruit is separation from that fellowship, and in pain and death that separation manifests itself. "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." To be dead is to be cut off from God who is the Life of the world. Again, "Thou shalt shew me the path of life ; in Thy presence is the fulness of joy : and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore." To dwell in the perfect communion of God's love is to be free from pain ; pain is the mark of a separation. If then pain and death be ultimate and final, they mark an eternal separation from God, and they become synonymous with Hell. And if sin has really separated this world from the love of God, we shall expect to find in the world pain and death as the very real marks of that separation. But if the separation

be not ultimate nor final, neither are the pain and death which are its manifestation. And if we may thus look on pain and death, we may understand how, though they be the consequence of evil, they cannot on that account be themselves treated simply as evil—that is, as things only to be fled from or destroyed. Just as a tract of difficult country may mark for a traveller his distance from the goal of his journey, and yet point the way towards it, so pain and death may mark our separation from the heavenly fellowship of God, and yet show us the path by which it is to be attained. If sin had never removed the world from the communion of God's Spirit, the rough and sombre road of return would never have had to be trodden. If the world had not sinned and gone astray, Christ Himself would never have had to suffer and to die, to show us the way back. Yet, granted the fact and the meaning of sin, suffering and death, however evil they appear, may be simply a terrible tract of experience which must be traversed by those who would reach home, a tract not simply to be shunned as evil, but boldly and cheerfully

faced as leading to the good, if only there be a way through it.

We should then, speaking more strictly, amend the metaphor which we used in saying that evil represented two enemies, sin the first, and pain and death the second. Sin is the real and living enemy, pain and death resemble rather the barriers wherein the enemy has confined us. The problem of sin is the problem how to destroy or escape from the Evil One. The problem of pain and death is the problem how to find a way through and out of the alien, terrible land in which he holds us captive. That journey can only be accomplished when the power of the enemy is destroyed : the victory over sin must come first. Yet to encourage our efforts in the struggle, we do need to see that there is a way through and out of his dominions. Where is that way ? Pain and death on earth do seem to us so terribly final that we begin to doubt whether, even if sin were vanquished, the victory would be worth while.

To such questionings the Christian gospel alone can bring a satisfying answer, just

because it is a gospel of life through death, not simply of a deathless life. It is a gospel of resurrection, not of mere immortality. It is perfectly and utterly sincere. It does not ask us to pretend that pain and death are really unimportant or can safely be ignored. Nor again does it confound the distinction between good and evil by seeking to persuade us that the cause of pain and death is to be found anywhere but in the malignant power of sin. But it does insist that pain and death are not necessarily ultimate or final ; they are not the last words for human life. They are real and terrible and, in a sinful world, necessary ; but for the believer their power of final destruction is abolished. For the Christian who faces and enters them boldly, they become the gateway of perfect life and joy.

That is the central truth which the recorded facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus are designed to teach. The bodily appearances after the resurrection assure us that nothing of our Lord's personal manhood had been lost or destroyed. It was He Himself, the same Christ Whom the disciples had known.

But the record is equally designed to show us that our Lord thus triumphed over death, not because death seemed to Him unimportant or unreal, but because, in obedience to the Will of God, He was content to undergo all the tremendously real suffering and horror which His death involved. The death of the Cross is not an incident in a life of self-conscious majesty: it is the culmination of a completed life of sacrifice. Our Lord's victory is not a heedless, careless exhibition of His own power—it is a victory won through and because of a complete submission. And therefore His resurrection-body was not merely the same which His disciples had known: it bore the clear marks of His passion. That suffering and death had not been without significance even for Him. They were the very ground of His triumph; and therefore for all eternity they left their mark upon Him.

It is in the light of this faith alone that we can without despair interpret the facts of our world and the conditions under which life in it is passed. We are now confronted by what has from time immemorial been

the tritest of commonplaces among all those who think and feel at all, viz., the universality of suffering and death. There is the clearest of all realities, the most obviously universal of all laws. In a well-known passage in the "Republic" Plato speaks of a man who, being sick of a mortal disease which he could not cure, nevertheless by extreme care and elaborate systems of diet contrived to survive as long as most of his friends. Plato tries to express his sense of the futility of such a proceeding by remarking that the man only succeeded in "dying hard" (*δυσθανατοῦν*), a word in which the heathen philosopher voices his contempt. But the same word might be applied with almost equal force to all life whatsoever upon this earth. It is all engaged simply in resisting death for so long as it can, in waging a losing battle which is bound sooner or later to end in apparent defeat. That is the truth which gives to books like "Ecclesiastes" and poems like those of Omar Khayyám their strange and irresistible appeal. There is the fact of which all explanations of the meaning of life are bound to take account. The religions and



philosophies of the world fall into two ultimate groups, according as they have met it squarely face to face, or sought with the shallow poetry of sentiment or the shallower dialectic of subterfuge to palliate its grimness and to belittle its force. Many philosophies and religions, notably those of the East, have faced it, and found their courage rewarded with despair. Many again, notably those which draw their inspiration from our Western gospel of evolution, have shirked the issue with such skill that they have invested their evasion with all the trappings of a victory. Christianity, and Christianity alone, has met the full shock of the reality, and retained its hope.

Christianity has faced the facts of suffering and death. It has not denied or palliated or belittled them. It has given them their fullest importance. But in so doing it has found a meaning for them and in that meaning a promise. Looking at the life of his Lord, the Christian maintains that suffering and death are for him almost a sacrament. They are the outward and visible signs to him of the complete self-surrender and self-sacrifice

that are needed before this mortal can put on immortality, before earthly life can pass the threshold of eternity.

The road through pain and death is the narrow way of self-sacrifice. It is as pointing to self-sacrifice that pain and death on earth lose for the Christian their repulsive aspect of sinful, hopeless evil, and become transformed into stern tutors of an immortal happiness.

To perceive this central truth is to find a new light shed on much of the obscure and mystical language about death and life with which our New Testament has made us a good deal too familiar. St. Paul declares that the Christian in baptism shares the death of Christ, that as Christ was raised from the dead, so he too may walk in the newness of the resurrection-life. We have already considered how St. Paul believed that this partaking of Christ's death and resurrection frees the believer from sin. We have now to ask what light it throws on the meaning of death.

It must be remembered that during the earlier part of his missionary career, St. Paul believed that the majority of Christian

converts would not undergo physical death, before the second coming of our Lord finally brought the Kingdom of God to earth. In the providence of God this very error enabled him to grasp more firmly the central truth, that physical death is only an outward symbol of the great fact that through self-sacrifice alone can the human personality enter upon life eternal. Self-sacrifice in its deepest sense means a giving away of all we are and all we have. And so to St. Paul the true death, which is the very gateway of heaven, is not simply the death of the body but the complete self-sacrifice, the need for which physical death is meant to teach. The death of Christ was only the culminating act of a life of self-sacrifice in obedience to the will of God. And in proportion as the Christian surrenders himself to serve Christ and to follow in His steps, he too by the death of self-sacrifice shares the Christ-life which physical death has no power to destroy. The whole earthly life and death of the Christian thus becomes a dying to live. The act of dying is not to be found in the death of the body alone, but is the continuous expression of the whole self-

sacrifice which is the keynote of the Christian life from baptism onwards. No doubt in very early times there was a danger lest the Pauline theology should be used to belittle the importance of the outward fact of physical death. This danger arose from the very clearness with which that theology had grasped the spiritual reality for which the outward fact stood. Early orthodoxy had often to contend against Gnostic speculations which, regarding matter as unreal and unimportant, alleged that even before physical death the human spirit could in the detachment of the mystic vision possess the full fruition of its final blessedness.<sup>1</sup> These Gnostic doctrines naturally issued in a most dangerous assumption of esoteric pride among those who felt or fancied themselves to be spiritually elect. The Church, with a sanity which is characteristically Christian, saw in these doctrines an attempt to separate the inward from the outward, which is false to the whole spirit of the Incarnation. In this controversy

<sup>1</sup> This is an inference from the general character of Gnostic mysticism. Our information as to the teaching of the Christian Gnostics is lacking in precision.

the chief orthodox weapon was found in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, to which St. Paul had given a new and deeper meaning. The doctrine of bodily resurrection, springing from the resurrection of the body of Christ, was of supreme importance alike in what it asserted and in what it therefore denied. It asserted that in any final consummation the bodily life of man must find a place, no less than the spiritual. It therefore denied that while the bodily life was still under the bondage of decay and death the whole life of man could possibly reach the blessedness of heaven.<sup>1</sup> Thus out of the confusion of contrary errors the truth more and more clearly emerged, that the death of the body is needed to complete the Christian's sacrifice of himself, and that, before that sacrifice is fulfilled, the Christian can only claim in his spiritual experience to enjoy a dim foretaste or, in Pauline language, the "first-fruits" of his heavenly inheritance on which he will one day enter through the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. especially Rom. viii. 22, 23; I. Cor. xv. 50 ff.; II. Cor. v. 1-4. The two aspects, positive and negative, of the doctrine of bodily resurrection provide the key to St. Paul's rather ambiguous teaching about the body.

grave. Perhaps we may now feel inclined to go even further and to maintain that for our sinful personalities the process of self-sacrifice, the need of dying to live, may even continue beyond the grave before it is finally complete.

But nothing can upset the central fact that St. Paul's interpretation of the death and resurrection of our Lord has found a meaning for the universal suffering and death which form the supreme characteristic of our earthly world. The facts compel us to recognise that all earthly life is a process of dying. The Christian answers that this must needs be so, since, in a sinful world, it is only through dying that life eternal can be won. The solution is in principle as universal as the problem which it meets. The universality of suffering and death is the outward and visible sign of the spiritual truth that only through self-sacrifice does the eternal life of humanity stand sure. The Christian's full acceptance of the facts of this world is the very ground of his unshaken faith in the world to come. The joy of earth is true and justified just because it is always more than earthly ;

it is the foretaste of the heavenly experience which the completion of sacrifice will bring to fulfilment beyond the grave.

Having thus sketched the general bearing upon our world of the Christian hope of immortality through sacrifice, let us try to discuss it rather more closely in connection with the facts of our own experience. We shall perhaps gain a clearer idea of the implications of the Christian doctrine and of the support which experience affords it, if we consider it in connection with certain false views of self-sacrifice, which at first sight seem to rise to greater heights of unselfishness than the Christian view can legitimately claim to reach.

We are sometimes told that the Christian teaching about self-sacrifice is tainted with selfishness because it claims an eternal life for the person who sacrifices himself. If a man were trying to sacrifice himself entirely, it is urged, he would in effect be endeavouring to annihilate himself; his aim, so far as he himself is concerned, would be simply self-destruction. But surely a little reflection enables us to detect in this view a radical



confusion of thought. According to it, complete self-sacrifice becomes in principle a form of suicide. Not all suicide would be self-sacrifice ; yet all complete self-sacrifice would issue in suicide. But this conclusion has only to be stated to be condemned. For all suicide is essentially a supreme act of selfishness. It is the act of a man who finds life so unpleasant that he determines at all costs to be rid of it. It is his final declaration that he has nothing left to live for, that there is no one he cares sufficiently about to go on endeavouring to do him service, that, in short, he cares for no life but his own, and as that life has wholly ceased to be desirable he refuses to continue it on any terms at all. Selfishness could go no further. Clearly self-sacrifice, the supreme act of unselfishness, must have a meaning utterly distinct from self-destruction, which is its very opposite.

And when we have carried our argument so far, the true antagonism between self-sacrifice and self-destruction immediately becomes plain. Suicide, in so far as it is in any sense a real motive for action, must



be selfish ; it cannot possibly enter into any act of self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice springs not at all from the desire to destroy oneself, but from the desire to give oneself—which is an entirely different thing. The man who wills to sacrifice himself for any cause or person means not at all to put an end to anything he has or is, but simply to give it all in the service he has chosen. If he dies in that service, death is not for him simply death—the destruction of his life—it is the giving of his life, so that in some way it may be of help. And is it conceivable or reasonable that two acts which are so radically opposed to each other in their whole motive and intention as the death of self-sacrifice and the death of suicide could possibly have the same result for the agent ? If there is any sense or reason in the world at all, the answer must be No. No self-sacrifice can end in the destruction of him who makes it.

So far our argument has had a very easy task. But the moral objection to the Christian doctrine of individual immortality through self-sacrifice often takes a subtler and more plausible form. Granted that the sacrifice

by which a man gives his life cannot be simply the end of his existence, it may nevertheless, we are told, be the end of his distinct individual existence. And facts of human experience are often adduced in support of this conclusion. It is urged that when a man loves very intensely and wholly lives for any cause or person, his distinct self tends to be merged and lost in the life of that for which he gives himself. His entire being is absorbed in a larger life, like a drop of water lost in a stream which it enters. And when the process of absorption is complete, we must suppose that the man's distinct individuality comes to an end. His eternity is nothing more than the permanent value of the contribution he once made through his death to that for which he died.

The reasoning is plausible, but further reflection on the facts by which it is supported shows it to be profoundly unsatisfactory and unconvincing. We have to consider the connection which human experience shows us to exist between self-sacrifice and the sense of individual distinction.

The savage has but little sense of his own

personal individuality. That sense is almost entirely merged in the wider whole of the family or tribe which at this stage of development is the true unit of existence. In reading the Old Testament most people must at times have wondered why it was that the Jews, without believing in a life after death for the individual, were nevertheless so profoundly influenced by the prediction of rewards or penalties which in consequence of their own action were to be brought upon their remote descendants long after they themselves had passed into the oblivion of Sheol. The explanation of this striking fact cannot be found in any attempt to make out that the main body of the Jewish race was capable of a higher unselfishness than the members of a modern community. No one would urge such a contention except for the sake of argument. The obvious truth is that the Jews had still hardly emerged from the savage condition of society where the family or tribe is everything, the individual nothing. Their sense of individuality was still undeveloped. The distinct personality of the individual begins to be realised by

the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with all the shock of a new discovery. "They shall no more use this proverb in Israel: The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge."

The primitive state of society in which the individual is lost in the family or the tribe cannot produce and is not produced by the highest kind of self-sacrifice. In such a state the highest form of self-sacrifice is impossible, exactly because the intense personal distinctness of the individual is not felt.<sup>1</sup> True self-sacrifice can only be found where the individual is intensely conscious of his own absolute distinctness, and, being so conscious, nevertheless determines to give his distinct self to serve another.

And the strange truth is—explain it how we will—that the development of self-sacrifice and the development of the sense of personal distinctness go together. That is one of the deepest truths of our experience. Just in proportion as we succeed in giving ourselves,

<sup>1</sup> In the same way, the savage is incapable of the worst form of suicide. Suicide is most real and most evil when it means the refusal to give in the service of others an intensely realised selfhood.

giving our time and trouble, our brains and bodies, to the service of others, we find not that we lose our sense of distinct being, but rather that we become more fully and distinctly ourselves; our self becomes deeper and more real, so that we have ever more to give in the service we have chosen. The closest and truest possible union between two persons involves as its condition and consequence that each will sacrifice and give himself to the other. But that does not mean that the distinction between the two persons is blurred, rather it is increasingly accentuated. The evidence which at first sight seems to contradict this view really furnishes its strongest support. Take what is really a crucial instance—St. Paul's sacrifice of himself in the service of Christ, and the wonderful sense of union with the Lord which was its result. St. Paul is actually able to say, "Not I live, but Christ liveth in me." At first sight the words might appear to mean that St. Paul felt himself altogether merged in the life of Him he served. There is no doubt one sense in which such an inference would be justified. But the exact opposite is equally

true, equally important, and far more often ignored. St. Paul's words declare plainly that his sacrifice of himself to his Master and his sense of union with Him had made him more, not less, conscious of his own personal distinction from the Master. It is precisely the sense of that distinctness which alone enables him to say, "Not I live." It is exactly the sense of the distinctness which gives point and meaning to the emphasis of the unity. This implication of the whole phase of human experience which St. Paul's words represent has been disastrously ignored by all those imposing theories of personality, which see in the distinctness of the human individual the mere mark of a transitory impotence.<sup>1</sup>

If then it is true that, so far as our experience on this earth has gone, self-sacrifice springs from and issues in an ever completer sense of personal distinctness, what are we to say of the greatest act of self-sacrifice which, in involving physical death, passes beyond the range of our earthly experience altogether?

<sup>1</sup> I refer especially to Dr. Bernard Bosanquet's profoundly interesting *Value and Destiny of the Individual*.

Surely if the giving of the physical life is the true culmination of sacrifice at all, it cannot be thought to issue in any loss of distinct personality for him by whom the sacrifice is made. Rather, when he has given himself most truly and most fully in the act by which he gives his life, then will he become most truly and distinctly himself. He will in the truest sense have died to live.

Let us sum up the argument. Self-sacrifice does not spring from the desire to be merged and lost oneself. It is the result of a tension between an intense feeling of personal distinctness on the one hand, and an invincible determination on the other to give the whole of that distinct self in an unselfish service. The desire to be merged and lost is only the cry of the weakling who cannot stand the strain which the highest self-sacrifice demands. And as self-sacrifice can never spring from the desire to be merged, so when it is fulfilled it cannot have that result. That result does not follow in the lesser instances of self-sacrifice the issue of which we cannot judge, and we argue, *a fortiori*, that it does not follow in the greatest instances



the issue of which passes beyond our ken. The man who dies in self-sacrifice, dies to live still as a distinct self, both in intention and in result. The argument from experience reinforces and supports the truth of Revelation.

And yet does not our conclusion compel us to acknowledge that some taint of selfishness must rest upon even our highest self-sacrifice? If self-sacrifice is in the full sense a dying to live, the self-sacrificing person seems to claim something for himself and thereby to be selfish.

The true answer to this deepest of problems lies in a right theory of personal individuality itself, what it consists in, and how it is to be realised. Much confusion has arisen from the persistence of the popular superstition that our individuality is a complete possession which our life carries with it from the start, and not rather a dim and far-seen goal to which it strives. Once we understand that our personalities are only in process of formation, it becomes evident that our argument is leading towards two possible conceptions of individuality representing two



contrasted and mutually antagonistic ideals. The false conception makes individuality depend on the exclusive possession of something no one else can have ; the true conception makes individuality depend on the unique contribution of something which no one else can give. It follows that the claim of the individual to eternal life is only selfish in so far as it implies the false view of individuality. So long as our claim to immortality is a claim to have for ourselves, it is selfish ; so long as it is a claim to give to others, it remains, in the highest, purest sense of the word, unselfish and self-sacrificing. Evidently the claim to give eternally must involve a claim to an eternal distinction for the personality that gives. For it is on the personal distinctness of the giver that the very possibility of giving depends. On the other hand, the claim to have for oneself involves a claim to separation for the personality that has. For in so far as I have something exclusively for myself, I cut myself off from my fellows. But personal distinction and personal separation, so far from implying each other, are set in a radical opposition

of mutual antagonism. It is from the confusion between the two that there spring all attempts to cast the slur of selfishness on the Christian gospel of eternal life.

Let us again draw support for our argument from the facts of life. Selfishness, the desire to have things for oneself, invariably leads to the isolation of the selfish individual. In proportion to his selfishness he is cut off from the reality of fellowship. When people pride themselves on the possession of gifts and experiences which no one else can share, when they are plunged in gloom through feeling they have nothing to give, when they develop a sense of superiority on the one hand, or a despair of possible usefulness on the other, just when in fact they feel their own separation from others, whether that sense gives them pleasure or pain, just then they are selfish or at least self-centred. But the selfishness which issues in separation hinders and kills the development of distinct individual personality. It is the inexorable law of the spiritual world that the selfish man's character will cease to grow and to develop; he will gain, not a progressive

individuality deepening into distinction as it gives, but a diseased spiritual life dragged down on to the dead level of nonentity by the very weight of its uncommunicated possessions. There is certainly some ground for thinking that a personality wholly submitted to the slavery of selfishness will in the end cease to be distinctly individual at all. For selfishness is essentially commonplace, and it does seem as if the selfish man through his very separation tends to return to the lower forms of individual distinction which we recognise in the savage and the brute. On the other hand, the unselfish personality which seeks to give all it has and is in the service of God and its fellows, thereby striving after union with the perfect humanity of Christ, finds in the realisation of its ideal its complete and true individual distinction.

Let us try to recapitulate the conclusions to which the argument has led. We have seen from the example of Christ, reinforced by the interpretation of our own experience, that only through self-sacrifice does the eternal life of humanity stand sure. The universality of suffering and death upon the

earth finds a new meaning as the outward sign of this all-embracing spiritual truth. But from the beginning all self-sacrifice on earth is a process of dying to live ; this dying to live is not confined in its manifestation to the death of the body. Physical death is but the outward sign of the need for spiritual sacrifice and marks the culmination of the process of sacrifice upon earth. Further, on examining the implications of self-sacrifice, we have found that it tends to abolish, indeed, the separation of individualities, but to emphasise and accentuate their distinctness.

What further light then can our discussion throw on the relation between this world and the next ?

On this earth our personalities are always to a very high degree separate one from another. Our sympathy with each other is still very much obstructed, very tentative and incomplete. Often we feel the tragic truth of the most melancholy of all proverbs, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger is not partaker in its joys." Therefore it is that the death of our separate selves is needed before we can emerge into

the truly distinct individuality of eternal life. Physical death is needed before the great change can be complete ; its realisation belongs to another world than this. But the beginnings and the earnest of the change are to be found in everything that tends here on earth to overcome the barriers of our separation—all love, sympathy and service, all those activities which 1,900 years of experience have sealed as characteristically Christian. And according to the measure of our success in breaking down those barriers in the strength of Christ we do here and now begin to enter upon life eternal. For life eternal is the realisation in complete individual distinctness of our union with Christ and with each other. Because Christ's sacrifice of Himself on earth was at every stage complete, nothing of His complete Person was lost in death. He was and is through all eternity the same. And we have our share, each of us, in that eternal sameness which death cannot impair, in so far as we follow in His steps. Our distinct individuality is present with us in part. It lives and abides just in proportion as our separate

self dies and disappears. Here we find the philosophic aspect of the great Christian mystery of victorious life through death. If we ask for a metaphysical definition of self-sacrifice as it appears on our sinful and tortured earth, we might describe it as the passage, through suffering, of the individual life from the separation which is transitory to the distinction which is eternal.

And what of the world beyond the grave? The giving up of this earthly life, in so far as it represents the greatest sacrifice we know, cannot issue in any loss of distinct individuality. It is a great step by which our imperfect separate personalities realise their distinct selfhood through the greatest of all acts of giving. We cannot tell how far the mere fact of bodily death can make perfect at once the still sinful life, or how far further discipline and higher forms of spiritual training may open out in the beyond. But surely the highest activity of earth by which the self is given must abide and continue in a more perfect form. When the final heaven is reached each individual will eternally find the completion of his selfhood in making his own

distinct contribution to the fulness of Christ. The activity of giving will abide when the terrible barriers and limitations, which make our giving here so painful and imperfect, will survive only as a memory that has lost its sting. The self-sacrifice which shows itself on earth only as a dying to live will remain in heaven as the joyful giving of a deathless life.

Has our creed something more to teach us in its doctrine of the resurrection of our bodies? The deepest tragedy of earth has always been found in the dreadful irrevocability of the past. Memory of bygone joy and goodness is an attempt to defeat the laws of temporal existence, but by its very nature the attempt never achieves complete success. Memory of things and persons only exists because the things and persons themselves are no longer really present with us. For all the pleasure that it brings, it remains in the end a striving after something unattainable. It is the presence of the past for which we long, and memory is but the spell of Orpheus's lyre, which almost draws up again for him a lost Eurydice from the land of shadows, only that she may vanish through



the very act by which he endeavours to hold her living form. In these circumstances promises of a merely new and better life in the future become as vain a comfort as the provision of a new and different set of children for the bereaved and reconciled Job. But the doctrine of Resurrection stands for the gospel of *recovery* ; and the resurrection of the body may surely be held to symbolise the true restoration in eternity of all that is real in the good which this world is perpetually burying under the sands of time. The joy of the resurrection of our Lord was the joy of a restoration full and complete. " Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." The meaning of salvation is the safekeeping of all good in the eternity of God. Eternity is the experience won through death, in which the past continues into the present without the loss of one jot of its reality. Immortality without resurrection, a heaven in which the good of earth is not recovered, can only be a mockery of our deepest desires. The doctrine of the resurrection of our bodies teaches us under the least inadequate of symbols the true relation of eternity to time.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE TRINITY

OUR discussion of Christian doctrines now reaches the Third Person of the Trinity, and our main task must be to suggest a few general considerations which may help us to see how belief in the Third Person is necessary to complete the knowledge of God, which His own revelation has imparted to us. It is, however, waste of time to discuss the doctrine of the Trinity at all, unless we first understand the original purpose which led to its formulation. We must therefore start with a digression.

In St. Augustine's phrase, celebrated indeed, but deserving a much wider celebrity, the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated *non ut diceretur, sed ne taceretur*, not so much in order to convey the positive truth—

for the truth is beyond language—as lest through the Church's silence errors should usurp its place. It was not meant to explain or even to expound the Christian faith, but to prevent unworthy exponents from explaining it away into some fresh form of Western idolatry or Eastern pantheism. It was set forth in philosophic terms, but it was not meant to philosophise the Gospel, but rather to safeguard weak or doubtful or simple-minded brethren from falling a prey to those who philosophised the Gospel badly. It is not too much to say that the doctrine of the Trinity sprang from the agnosticism of faith, an agnosticism far more profound and more searching than any which the modern unbeliever, with his cheap machine-made universe, can conceive.<sup>1</sup>

How much of the intellectual troubles of the Church are due to failure to understand

<sup>1</sup> Cf. St. Hilary *de Trinitate*, II, 2. "We are forced through the fault of heretics and blasphemers to do that which is unlawful, to climb inaccessible heights, to speak what cannot be uttered, to encroach upon what is forbidden." Dr. Goudge makes some instructive remarks on this subject in his pamphlet on *The Holy Trinity* (New Tracts on the Creed, S.P.C.K., No. X).

that this is the true reason and purpose of dogma? Certainly the Church has so often failed to understand it herself that she cannot blame her critics for following her example. It is profoundly true that the dogmas of the Catholic Church are directed against heresy; but they are properly directed, not against those who are doubtful about God, but against those who are falsely assured. Historically that is true, because agnosticism did not exist as a dangerous force when the creeds were composed. They were aimed entirely at confident teachers of a different, easier, and less mysterious faith. And that surely should be their purpose still. Christian dogma can never condemn those who are acutely conscious of the utter inadequacy of their knowledge of God. It is exactly such whom the Christian faith is meant to justify, to sympathise with and to help. Such men are intellectually the counterparts of the publican of the Gospels, men justified already by their sense of their own need, and much too distrustful of themselves to resent the voice of authority. The dogmas of the Church can only rightly exclude

those who think they know better, those, for instance, who run eagerly after the latest intellectual whim of the universities, who are indignant that the Church does not provide a new belief as often as science provides a new theory, or fashion a new hat, who are far too firmly convinced of the superiority of their own undogmatic and broad-minded faith to have the faintest inkling of what real agnosticism means. Christ condemned, and the faith of His Church rejects, not those who are blindly searching, but those who say, "We see." And it is a striking feature of the modern world, and one far too often ignored, that such Pharisaism is found less and less among the orthodox and conservative, and more and more in the ranks of the "sceptics" and the liberals.

It is towards impressing upon man the essential mysteriousness of the Godhead that the whole weight of Christian dogma is directed. There are depths of mystery in the loving Fatherhood of God, utterly lost to those who identify Him merely with the spirit of love among men. There are depths of mystery in the divine condescension which

united two natures in Jesus, utterly lost to those who offer Him the title of God merely as a sort of honorary title, because He has deserved so well of humanity. There are depths of mystery in the Personal Spirit, Who makes intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered, utterly lost to those who find in His operation merely the working of a "vital force." The faith of the Church Catholic cannot make any terms with such reasonable and simple explanations. The Church may sin in an opposite direction. She may be afraid where no fear is, she may be slow to accept new light on the old revelation, she may justify her reputation for narrowness, by excluding from her outward fellowship those whom she should have welcomed. All these charges have been true in the past, and for their truth she must repent. Yet God is not limited by His Church : He is well able to reconcile to Himself those whom in her blindness she has shut out of her fold. But what if the Church betray the very mystery of the revelation entrusted to her stewardship ? What if she allow the intellectuals of modern thought, preaching in

her name, to make it so easy to understand that it is not worth believing, so swift to change that it is impossible to hold? What if the very salt lose its distinctive savour, if the very light be merged in the general fog of confusion, if the Christian's very birthright of revealed truth be bartered for a freshly-cooked mess of "undogmatic" generalities? Truly, whatever might then happen to the world, the Church would have committed a fault not less grave than that of using her authority to stifle the voice of the merely inconvenient critic.

If then we regard the doctrine of the Trinity as an authoritative dogma, its main function is negative rather than positive. It is, like all true dogma, a fence round the mystery of the gospel, designed to protect something which it does not by itself reveal. Its purpose is to be found rather in its exclusion of destructive errors than in its exposition of what God has made known. For the deepest revelation of God is His love, at the reality of which no intellectual forms of speech can even hint. It was only because false intellectual expressions of that revelation proved so

dangerous, that an intellectual form had to be found to exclude them. Nevertheless that form had of necessity to be the least inadequate expression which the intellect could discover of what God had revealed about His Nature. Such a form could be agreed upon at the time the Athanasian Creed was written, because there was a more or less agreed system of philosophy to provide the form, and a more or less united Church to accept it. To-day those conditions no longer exist, and the doctrine of the Trinity still stands clothed in the philosophic technicalities of a bygone age. For the modern Church restatement is impossible; rejection would be a betrayal of her trust. Her task is still to safeguard the mysterious revelation which the doctrine enshrines, to exclude the shallow explanations which would destroy it, and to encourage the fullest variety of re-interpretation which throws a fuller light upon its meaning.

For it is precisely the negative, exclusive purpose of the dogma which, when rightly understood, enables it to include ever fresh and different interpretations of the truth



which it protects. If its aim were to state with authority one complete intellectual interpretation of the Christian faith, then obviously those who accept the dogma must regard its intellectual form as the only right one; all others must, in comparison with it, be false. In that case the dogma will, indeed, be the instrument of an intellectual tyranny crushing the freedom of human speculations. But if its aim be rather to protect a mystery, incapable of complete intellectual interpretation, from interpretations which by their false completeness<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is quite true that many modern and modernist interpretations of the faith, which orthodoxy must reject, would themselves be most anxious not to claim completeness. But herein their authors very commonly delude themselves. For their whole purpose, as a rule, is to simplify the intellectual interpretation of the Christian faith by saying in effect, "This is all it means." *E.g.*, they sometimes address us in language something like this: "You find the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God difficult? But after all all good human nature is God-like and all we need mean by calling Jesus Christ God is an acknowledgment that he was the most God-like of men." The moment such poverty-stricken theories enter at the door, the mystery of God's love vanishes out of the window. It is the purpose of dogma to keep such theories out. Teaching of this falsely simplifying tendency fails to understand that the simplicity of God's Revelation is not an intellectual but an evangelical simplicity. The gospel as gospel is as simple as the stretching out of a hand, and the



destroy the value of the mystery, then, while it will certainly reject some unworthy speculations, it will none the less find room for an unlimited variety of others, none of them claiming completeness but each enabling us to see a little further into the dim recesses of God's Being. The acceptance of the dogma will not then tie us down to any particular intellectual theory; it will merely seal our rejection of any theory which would make the nature of God appear as anything other than the deepest, holiest and most precious mystery of the universe.

It often escapes the notice of those who rail against the exclusiveness of dogma, that in an imperfect world anything which is significantly inclusive must fix a limit of inclusion. A kingdom which has literally no boundaries cannot be said to contain anything. The Church could not be seeking to include the whole world, unless it had some simplest faith may grasp it. But just as the simple act of stretching out the hand involves for him who seeks to understand the process involved, the most complicated interplay of nerves and muscles, so he who would reflect upon the process and implications of God's revelation, must find himself involved in a complexity which is inexhaustible, in a mystery which deepens the further he seeks to penetrate therein.

definable boundaries, within which to bring what is at present outside. Even the infinite Being of God could not really include all the good in the world, unless it shut out all the evil. The Absolute of the Hegelians ceases to have any real character or meaning, just when it becomes impossible to hold that anything really falls outside it. So the dogma of the Trinity, wherein all Christian dogma is summed up, fixes the boundaries of Christian belief. It does not show us all the treasures that lie within; it offers us a field for research which we can never exhaust. But it does tell us where to look, and it does warn us that, if we reject the limit which it sets, our efforts will turn out in the end to be vanity and a striving after wind. It is the attempt of this whole book to suggest that the tracts which lie within the limits of the older trinitarian orthodoxy have not yet been adequately explored, and that before we remove the boundary-mark we shall do well to dig deeper into the field which it defines. Perhaps if we do so, we shall yet live to bless the wisdom of those who marked it out.

But, as we have suggested, the doctrine of the Trinity had a secondary as well as a primary purpose, and the two may be distinguished, though the latter involves the former. The primary purpose was to exclude by an intellectual formula intellectual explanations of the Gospel, the acceptance of which would have fatally impaired the gospel-message. But in order to fulfil that purpose the doctrine had in some sense to present a rival interpretation, in intellectual forms which were then agreed but have since become obsolete. The doctrine of the Trinity does then suggest some positive theory about God's revealed nature, which, though it be utterly incomplete and is now capable of fuller expression in terms other than Aristotelian, does yet convey an essential truth which must abide through all formulations. In other words, the doctrine may be considered not merely and strictly as a dogma, but as a belief to which reason points as the least inadequate manner of expressing the deepest attainable conception of the Divine Nature. It must now be our task so to consider it. And if this prove to be the briefest discussion in the book, that

does not imply that its subject is least important, or Christian belief here least firmly held. Rather, we approach the belief which sums up Christian faith, and for that reason we are taken into a sphere, where the forms of discursive reasoning are in any case so overtaxed that few words may well be as good as many. The main purpose of the dogma of the Trinity is negative ; the positive purpose of the doctrine can be no more than a dim indication of possibilities. The agnosticism which springs from the reverence of faith must shrink from torturing into speech the truth after which it is groping. The motto, "God is in heaven and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few," is in many contexts one to be remembered.

Under the Name of God the Father we think of God as the First Cause, Supreme Lord and Final End of all existence. Under the Name of God the Son we think of the same God revealed through manhood and thereby bringing salvation to a struggling, sinful world which has forgotten its First Cause, rebelled against its Supreme Lord, and turned aside from its Final End. God

the Son is the Revealer and Redeemer, showing man the nature of the Father from Whom he has departed, and lighting up and making it possible for him to tread the way by which he may return to his eternal home. But, even so, our conception of God has not yet reached its full completeness. For God is also He Who within man enables his eyes to see the light, and is the Power moving him in every step that he takes along the road. The whole relation of God to man is not completed by thinking of God as Creator and End, and again as Revealer and Captain of Salvation. In these relations God, in a sense, remains outside man, though He reveals Himself through manhood. God must also move man from within to acknowledge His Creator and Lord, to press toward his goal, to accept and appropriate the message of salvation which God sends.

Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit even the reconciliation wrought by our Lord's Atonement would not be all-sufficient for the salvation of man. The Atonement, as it were, places the grace of reconciliation as a free gift within man's reach. But man

must be moved to accept that gift by faith, and thereafter to realise in Christian living the consequences which that faith involves. Thus the Divine Transcendence of the Father, the Divine Mediation of the Word, must be fulfilled by the Divine Immanence of the Spirit. For thus and thus alone is the whole process of earthly life taken up utterly into the Godhead.

The same truth may be expressed in a different form. There are two ways or directions in which the human soul may push its enquiry after God. It may seek after the Supreme *object* of all knowledge, all love and all desire. In the light of Christ's revelation it will carry its search through outward things in the end to God above. Or the soul may turn in upon itself and ask what is that by which it is enabled to know truth, to love and to desire goodness. And again in the light of Christ's revelation it will carry its search through its own interior life in the end to God within. But though God above and God within and God Who illumines the search are all One and the Same, yet there remain distinctions within

the Godhead so sought and so finally attained. God Who is the one satisfying Object of knowledge and desire, God who inspires and moves the process of knowing and desiring, God Who teaches and reveals to us how we shall know and desire aright, are one and the same God, yet one and the same in otherness. The categories of human speech are strained to bursting by such thoughts as these, but spiritual experience does seem dimly to hint at some such Unity in triple distinction as that which the Christian Creed struggles to express.

The doctrine of the Trinity is commonly approached from a different point of view. We are invited to consider the nature of God as He is in Himself apart from the created world and to consider the Holy Spirit as the living bond of love joining Father and Son in an eternal Unity. We need not attempt to say that such a conception is false. But it may seem over-bold to attempt to consider the Godhead apart from God's self-revelation in and through the world wherein we live.

Moreover we must be very cautious in



allowing ourselves to apply to the Persons of the Godhead distinctions characteristic of our own individual personalities. To say that we believe in Three Divine Personalities, however fully united in the bond of loving communion, would surely be dangerously near to admitting an essential tritheism. A closer examination of the original trinitarian formulæ will perhaps carry us a little nearer to the essential significance of the doctrine. In the Latin of the West the formula ran, *Una Substantia* (or *Essentia*), *Tres Personæ*, translated quite literally, One substance (or essence), Three Persons. In the Greek of the East, however, there is a noteworthy difference of expression. Here the formula fixed is, *Μία Οὐσία, Τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις*, translated quite literally, One Essence, Three Substances. We shall therefore naturally conclude that in order to describe the "Persons" of the Deity the early Church was searching for some word the meaning of which should fall somewhere between that of the Latin *persona* and that of the Greek *ὑπόστασις*. The word *persona* does not imply what we commonly mean by personality. Its leading



idea is usually that of representation. Thus *dramatis personæ* are the characters or representations in a play. *Persona ecclesiæ* is the representative of the church, or the parson. If therefore the trinitarian formula stood in the Latin version alone, it would convey rather the idea of One Being in Three Representations. It was not, however, intended to imply that (as the Sabellians held) the distinctions in the Godhead were *mere* distinctions of representation or manifestation, which had no real root in the essential nature of the Divine Being. Any such inference is excluded by the fact that the Latin *persona* is represented in the Greek not by *πρόσωπον* (which might easily mean a mere appearance) but by *υπόστασις*, which corresponds more nearly to "substance." The Greek formula most clearly conveys that the distinction between the Persons is substantive and ultimately real. But again if the Greek formula stood by itself, the difference between *οὐσία*, essence, and *υπόστασις*, substance, might seem hard to determine, and it must in its turn be interpreted by the help of the Latin version. Perhaps if we were to try to search

for modern terms which would best express the essential meaning of the Greek formula as it stands, we might say that God is One Being, and that Being contains three distinct centres.<sup>1</sup> Combining then the Latin and Greek formulæ, we understand them to teach that God is essentially One Being, that that Being is manifested in Three Representations, and that these distinctions are more than mere modes of revelation, and have their source in Three Centres within the Unity of the Godhead Itself.

The resulting conception of the Godhead seems to us abstract, neuter and impersonal, because the ancients thought of reality in terms of static being and substance, whereas we think of it rather in terms of dynamic life and personal activity. To give the doctrine a concrete meaning to the modern mind,

<sup>1</sup> The Greek word *ὑπόστασις* means literally a substratum or foundation, hence in philosophy, that on which an object rests, the ground or substance of its objective reality. The word "centre" suggests the source or starting-point of an activity, that from which it issues forth. In translating therefore the old philosophy of essence and substance into the more dynamic terms which modern philosophy prefers to employ, I venture to represent the word *ὑπόστασις* by "centre."

it is therefore necessary to use a freer method of translation, and to import ideas which are alien to the philosophic categories of Aristotelianism. Perhaps we might attempt to do so thus. God is the One Perfect Personality. The characteristics of that Personality, almighty love, wisdom and power, belong to God always everywhere. Yet the life of the Personality operates and reveals itself through three distinct Activities. Since each of the Activities has in itself the fulness of the love, wisdom and power of God, each is by itself fully personal, yet are all Three contained in the One Personal Life.

What we have all already said concerning human experience may serve to give some concrete application to this statement. The true life of man consists in a searching and striving after a full communion of love and knowledge with the Deity. This process is accomplished through three distinct operations of God. In God as the ultimate Fount of all reality, the search finds its original source and supreme object. In God as revealed in humanity, it finds the guide to whom it looks for the direction of its effort. In God

inwardly moving it, it finds its constant impulse to follow its guide and to achieve its end. Each of these three Divine Operations is by itself fully personal; each is the Love, Wisdom and Power, which we understand to be the Divine Nature, and therein each is identical with the others.

Yet as Personal Activities they remain distinct, and surely even in the end they cannot be reduced to a mere or bare identity. The eternal life of man must eternally be stirred by God with the inward desire to know and to love Him. That desire must eternally be satisfied by God as its object and end. And the communion between two different natures, which this satisfaction involves, is only possible in and through the mediation of God taking upon Himself the human nature which He created. The whole approach of man to the Father takes place in Christ and proceeds from the inner motion of the Spirit. This seems to offer one way in which man's struggling intellect can begin to form for itself some conception of the truth of the Trinity. Of the ultimate nature

of the distinction between the Persons we can say almost nothing. Yet we can see that to deny its reality would in the end be to reduce all distinctions to the level of an illusion ; they would vanish if all life were taken up altogether into the Godhead thus conceived. We are concerned to insist that the fullest unity of all life wholly absorbed in the communion of God does not destroy distinctions within the unity. That truth is safeguarded by our faith in the existence of ultimate distinctions within the life of the Godhead Itself. We dare not think of God as He is apart from our experience and apart from the created world whereof we are members. Our experience of God as revealed in that world hints at distinctions within the Godhead, which we believe to have their source in His ultimate reality. More than this perhaps we dare not say.

We must now turn our attention more closely to that special function in the Divine Revelation, which our faith has taught us to assign to the Holy Spirit.

*I. The Holy Spirit proceeding from the  
Father.*

The Nicene Creed teaches us to believe in God the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son, and this "double procession" indicates two points of view from which we may regard His work. The Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father and Creator. From the earliest birth of life, and even in the bringing about of the conditions which made life possible in our world, we trace a movement upward in the Creation, a struggle towards something higher and better, a process which we have been taught to call "evolution" in the truest and widest sense of the term. As we have already seen, the creative work of God in fashioning the world is gradual. He did not bring to birth a world perfect, developed and complete, in the first moment of time. Nor again has God created the world wholly from without. In the chaos, before the world was, the Spirit of God "moved upon the face of the waters," and it is this Spirit of God in the world Who moves it and fashions

it from within, until in its complete development it shall attain the Divine purpose which was the origin of its being. It is the same Spirit and the same Power Whose inward moving divided the cell of the amoeba, Who inspires the prophet in every age to guide his generation one step upward upon the steep ascent of heaven. The process is one, for the One Spirit of the Almighty Father works in the whole.

That is the Christian interpretation of the history of the world. True, it is an interpretation beset with difficulties still perplexing, and problems still unsolved. Yet, if it be true, it does at least provide (apart from the problem of evil already discussed) a real explanation of facts. It is exactly a real explanation, whether true or false, which naturalistic accounts of evolution are powerless to supply. Naturalistic accounts, in the widest sense, are those which endeavour to explain the course of the development of the world without admitting the operation of any cause or power beyond the natural creatures themselves in which the development takes place. Naturalism maintains that earthly

natural life, whether animal or human, is in itself sufficient to explain its own progress from lower to higher forms. The name covers many theories which it is not now possible to discuss. But we may illustrate our contention from naturalism in its most modern and most spiritual form, as it is interpreted in M. Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution*. M. Bergson's metaphysical visions indeed seem to lead him to a position not very far from the Kingdom of God. He has often used really magnificent language about the one *élan vital* pulsing through all life and striving to lift it up towards self-conscious spiritual freedom. But the *élan* remains a natural impulse of the merely natural life which it raises, and M. Bergson's rhetoric only shows up in clearer relief the impossibility of finding any spiritual explanation of evolution, so long as the motive force of evolution is sought wholly within the merely natural order itself. We may put the argument in the form of a dilemma. If the first impulse which originally started life upon its course did not direct it towards any goal, but blindly left the subsequent forms of life, in which



it issued, to their own undirected spontaneity, clearly no explanation has been offered of any unity of direction which the whole course of the development of life displays. This mere spontaneity, which M. Bergson holds to be the essence of life, might account for development in different and apparently random directions; but in so far as life in its multiplicity shows any uniform effort and progress from "lower" to "higher" (or, indeed, in any *one* direction), that development remains utterly unexplained. In this case, therefore, when we speak of the *unity* of life shown in its progressive growth and evolution, we are merely giving a *description* of observed facts, which does not in itself contain or imply any *explanation* whatsoever, since no *principle* of continuity has been discovered. If, on the other hand, the primary original impulse does in any sense determine and explain the subsequent development of life in one direction, we can only attach an intelligible meaning to our assertion if we maintain that the primary impulse was in some sense provident and purposive, that it was not merely a striving of we know not what blind

spontaneity, but that there was behind and within it a power which intended and endeavoured to achieve something like the results which life subsequently reached, and is still endeavouring to reach more fully in the future. No one, however, would contend that the "lowest" and most original forms of life possessed in themselves any such conscious purpose or intention. If then we would *explain* the facts, we are driven to the conclusion that there lay behind and within the primary impulse of life towards development some supernatural purposive power not belonging to the natural cells themselves, but working through them towards some end of which they were themselves unconscious. Clearly the nature and character of this power will be more clearly revealed in proportion as it achieves its purpose.

According to the Christian, the power is none other than the Holy Spirit of God breathed by God into the world from the first moment of creation and working out from within the development of its growth. In the soul of man for the first time the natural being begins to have some inkling

of the divine spiritual life which is moving it. In Christ that divine life stands revealed as the Spirit of God's love. Yet the purpose is not yet completely worked out in the world as a whole ; it is still fighting the forces of evil which hamper its fulfilment. But thus it is, according to the Christian doctrine, that the Eternal Spirit reveals His operation gradually, as He works through the time process which measures the development of the world.

## *II. The Holy Spirit proceeding from the Son.*

The Holy Spirit proceeds not only from God the Father but also from God the Son. The Incarnation of the Eternal Word reveals the Spirit Who moves the world not only as the Spirit of the Creator but also as the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit has always proceeded forth eternally from the Eternal Word ; the procession did not begin on the day of Pentecost. Yet that day revealed Him to man as the Spirit of the Incarnate Christ, and the fact of that revelation gives to His work on earth a new fulness of power.

The discourses at the end of St. John's Gospel state quite clearly, so far as human language can express it, the relation of Pentecost to the Ascension of our Lord, and we find essentially the same doctrine not obscurely present in the Epistles of St. Paul. Two points clearly emerge, (1) that the Holy Spirit is distinct from Christ, (2) that where the presence of the Spirit is, there also is the presence of Christ. The words, "I will send unto you *another* Comforter," are immediately balanced by the promise, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." And a careful reading of Romans viii, 9 to 11, shows a precisely similar distinction corrected by the implied assertion that where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit, though as a Person He is distinct from Christ, nevertheless brings the presence of the Ascended Christ into the souls of men.

By this difficult doctrine of the relation of the Spirit to Christ, the balance is held between the two complementary effects of the Ascension of our Lord into Heaven. On the one hand, the Ascension implies the

outward absence of our Lord from the earth into which He came in the flesh ; on the other hand, the Ascension issues in an inward presence of our Lord on earth through His Spirit. The balance is between an outward departure and an inward return accomplished through the Person of Another.

By the Ascension the outward visible presence, manifested in the Resurrection appearances, is for a time withdrawn. In this sense the Ascension into Heaven is a real departure from the earth. The outward Presence will hereafter be restored fully and completely to the sight of men on that day when our Lord "comes again," when Heaven and earth are made one, and this world passes for ever into the next. Meanwhile the withdrawal serves as the great reminder that the ascended victorious Christ has His home in another sphere than this sinful earth. We are bidden to look for the life of the world to come, exactly because in this world we can never possess the full fruition of His Presence. If anyone thinks it wrong to admit such a real absence of Christ from the world, let him consider again

the value of St. Paul's contrast between present faith and hope and future sight.

Nevertheless the outward departure marks the beginning of a fuller inward return. By speaking of the return as inward, not outward, we mean that our Lord does not present Himself now on earth as the object of direct perception, as He did in His appearances after the Resurrection. We do not *see* Him, as those apostles did, or again as we believe the redeemed shall for ever behold His face in Heaven. Mystic experiences which put forward any such claim must be treated with the utmost caution, if not with positive distrust; though probably one exception should be made in the case of the vision which sealed the apostleship of Paul, a vision which St. Paul himself clearly placed in an altogether different category from the other "visions and revelations" vouchsafed to him. It seems quite in accord with Scripture and reason to maintain that in so far as our Lord is the *object* of any human apprehension upon earth, He is the object not of direct perception but of faith, faith being interpreted in the Pauline sense as

that faculty by which we reach forward to a future fulness of knowledge or perception, which must be at present withheld. Even the sacramental presence of Christ, though we *believe* it to be in the full sense objective, is nevertheless “veiled” under the outward sign.

But in any case we do not mean that our Lord is therefore cut off from the life of the world. Because He has ascended, He is present always everywhere, where sin does not reject Him, as the Leader and Head of the redeemed humanity which He represents. The presence is not outwardly manifested; it is inwardly apprehended by faith, and that faith is the gift of His own Spirit Whom He sends to stir men’s hearts to desire to follow and to love Him. To such faith everything Christlike in human life declares the presence of the Saviour. As St. John tried so hard to teach his disciples, Christ Himself is present in the life of Christian love, however commonplace be its circumstances. To have the Spirit of Christ therefore is to know the spiritual presence of Christ on earth. Our desire for that knowledge can

never be wholly satisfied on earth, for here we have only the knowledge of faith which looks forward to full consummation hereafter. But just as our Lord is gone to prepare a place for His followers in Heaven that He may receive them there, so His Spirit on earth prepares their souls that there they may be enabled to receive Him by faith now, and hereafter in the fulness of knowledge and of sight. It is the Spirit alone Who stirs every true thought, every right perception, every holy feeling and Christlike action, that belong to humanity ; and through them all man has fellowship with Him Who sent the Spirit to inspire them.

From this central doctrine of the procession of the Third from the Second Person of the Holy Trinity there follow important consequences, theological and practical. The whole operation of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the revelation of Christ is summed up in two descriptive terms which the Bible has taught us to apply to it, viz., witness and sanctification. It is important to notice at once that the two terms do not denote two departments of the Spirit's work, but two aspects in



which the whole may be regarded. Every activity which the Holy Spirit moves may be thought of either as a testimony leading man to Christian truth, or as an influence fashioning man into Christian holiness. We will consider each aspect in turn.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WITNESS

IT is a singular and deplorable fact that no department of thought is plunged deeper in intellectual confusion than that which is known by the unattractive title of "Christian evidences." The storm-centre of controversy in the attack and defence of the faith has been and will always be the Incarnation. Was the man Jesus Who lived for a few brief years in Palestine very God of very God ? That is the central question. If it be answered in the negative, the derivative questions, Did He rise from the dead ? Was he born of the Virgin ? are simply not important enough to merit discussion. If, on the other hand, the answer to the central question be affirmative, the discussion of the derivative questions assumes a different character and presents a less discouraging perplexity. True,

the answer to the central question must to some extent depend on the historic evidence (in the narrow sense) for the facts concerning which the answer is made. But the central problem of our Lord's life is not historical but theological. It is conceivable that a man might have risen from the dead, and yet that his life might possess no special importance for religion. It is inconceivable that the Son of God should have come down to earth without bringing a message eternally vital to every human soul.

To see the problems connected with our Lord's life in their true perspective is to understand how perversely many historical critics have mishandled and misconceived the evidence on which the Christian faith is based. Too often the critic asks us to dismiss from our minds what he is pleased to call "theological bias." By this demand he means that we should approach the facts of our Lord's life and death as if they were mere facts like all others in the natural world, and that we should set aside all their consequences in subsequent history as irrelevant to the issue. Having thus achieved what

he considers to be an impartial standpoint, the critic proceeds to discover that the evidence is wholly insufficient to justify our acceptance of any such very "exceptional" fact as a miraculous resurrection, and he ends by triumphantly concluding that the whole Christian faith, historical and theological, requires at the least some drastic surgery, which he is often honestly eager to provide. The popular name for the operation is "re-statement in terms of modern thought."

It does not seem to occur to these self-accredited specialists in sincerity that in order to "face facts" they have turned their backs upon logic. Their assumed impartiality has really begged the whole question from the beginning of the argument. If the facts of our Lord's life are *merely* like any other facts in the natural order, if our Lord's death is to be considered and discussed merely in the same way as the death of Julius Cæsar or John Smith, then our Lord was merely an ordinary man, and the critics' conclusion is right, though hardly by any stretch of the imagination can it be said to have been proved. But the question which Christian

faith purports to answer is not simply concerned with "one Jesus Who was dead and Whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Such a question might be scientifically interesting, but Festus was perfectly justified in dismissing it as of no general importance. The question Christian faith struggles to answer is very different, "Was Jesus Christ the Son of God revealed with power?" The answer to this question must depend not merely on the "historic" evidence for events like the Crucifixion and Resurrection, but on our estimate of the whole Biblical record of fact and teaching and of the whole long result of those facts and teachings from that day to this. The critics profess to be testing a chain by its weakest link. In reality they are criticising a musical sequence when they have only listened to one or two of its chords.

If we would ever dissipate the fog enveloping the conflict, wherein the combatants justify their claim to impartiality chiefly by the random distribution of their blows, we must return to the teaching of the Bible itself, so clearly given, so frequently ignored, that the great evidence for the truth of the Gospel

is the testimony of the Holy Spirit. "When the Comforter is come He shall testify of Me." "Hereby know we that Christ abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." "The Lord also bearing witness and confirming the word by signs following." The Apostles were sent forth as witnesses to the Resurrection, and their witness began as soon as and not before the Holy Spirit descended. It is needless to multiply instances to prove the teaching of the Bible on this point. There are not wanting signs—Dr. A. W. Robinson's *Christ and the Church* is the most recent—that we are beginning to recognise at last the futility of resting the evidence for our faith on any other basis than that which the Bible so unmistakably lays down.

If we interrogate the Bible further as to the nature and manner of the witness which the Spirit bears, we find that it takes two main forms :

(a) The inward witness in the individual heart ;

(b) The outward witness of mighty works performed by His power.

(a) The inward witness is scarcely susceptible of discussion, for it belongs to the most private and personal experience of every man and woman born into the world. Yet it is often insufficiently appreciated through failure to recognise that in different persons it must take very different forms. To some it comes as a clear and definite voice from God which it is literally impossible to stifle or to disregard. Thus it is that prophets have heard it. "The lion hath roared," says Amos, "who shall not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" "For if I preach the gospel," says St. Paul, "I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." There are those in all ages who have had experience of a similar type. Many Christians can point almost to the exact day and hour when the inner voice convinced them once for all of the truth of Christ. But in the majority of Christians, the inward witness takes a less definite form and shows itself

in a far more gradual development. Perhaps the witness lies in the indefinable appeal which the whole gospel-story makes to a man's inner being. Perhaps it is manifested as a scarcely articulated conviction that when he tries to be as Christ would have him, then and then only is his life right and healthy before God. "Hereby know we that we know Him," says St. John, "if we keep His commandments."

But whatever be the manner of the witness, whether it be definite and unmistakable, or merged in the throng of common feelings and ideas, whether it come to us in an "uprush from the subliminal self," in the conclusion of a metaphysical argument, in an intuition of conscience, or simply in a saving instinct of commonsense, there in the soul the witness of God the Spirit must be, if the revelation of God the Son is to be accepted and believed. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Such sayings only seem harsh if we fail to recognise the diversity and the intimacy of the Spirit's operation. If men could only learn the



lesson which St. John and St. Paul try so hard to teach, and search their hearts for His testimony, there would probably be far less doubt and denial of religious belief, far less certainly of that noisy heckling of apostles and evangelists, which, while it professes to enquire after knowledge, only succeeds in drowning the still small voice of truth. The Word of God is not really hidden from us, neither is it far off. It is not up in the heavens of space nor away over the seas of time, neither is it to be sought deep in the morass of critical disputes. The Word of God is very nigh unto us, in our mouth and in our heart, that we may do it. The truth of the Gospel must dawn upon us, not merely as a discovery, but as a recognition. It cannot appear as something wholly strange and alien to our souls, but only as something which has all along stirred in us the desires and the questionings which it satisfies. If we would recognise any act of God upon earth, we must have God's witness in ourselves that it is indeed His work. If all men have some sense of spiritual values, it is because God in His mercy has

not altogether taken His Holy Spirit from them.

(b) But as well as the inward witness in the soul, there is also the outward witness of the mighty works performed in the Holy Spirit's power. The Apostles consistently appealed to the works wrought and the powers bestowed by the Spirit as the sign and seal of their divine commission, as the proof that Christ had indeed risen from the dead and sent them forth to be His messengers to the world. But here again we must not allow ourselves to under-estimate the diversity of the Spirit's operation. In the earliest days of the Church's history the characteristic signs which declared His Presence were often strange and startling—in the common sense of the word, miraculous. Visions, revelations, speaking with tongues, prophesyings, gifts of healing, are among those specially noticed by St. Paul. Similar occurrences are not unknown to-day. But in the early Church the very prevalence of "miraculous" phenomena makes it the more remarkable that the Apostles never limited to miracle the signs of the Spirit's manifesta-

tion. In the great twelfth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the interpretation of tongues, are placed side by side with "miraculous" gifts, as all being in the same sense and degree diverse workings of one and the same Spirit. St. Paul there teaches quite insistently that the relative importance of the different gifts is to be measured not at all by their abnormality or strangeness, but by their power to edify the Church ; and his discussion reaches its climax in the glorious panegyric on the least miraculous and most wonderful of the Spirit's gifts, the gift of Christian love.

"Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, take account of these things." If men would only really take account of them, estimate their worth and meaning, and trace them to their source, they would find a chorus of testimony to the truth that is in Christ

Jesus. There is a multitude of doubtful but honest enquirers who might be confirmed in the faith they desire to make their own, if only they could be brought to appreciate the heritage of the Spirit's witness bequeathed to them in the life of every man and woman in whom His power has wrought. We need not think only of those whose names are written for all to see in calendars and histories. There be of them whose memorial is graven only in the hearts of the one or two who have known their love. The historian of Church or State has not heard of them, the student of religious psychology would pass them by; they are uninterestingly normal. But He Who once said, "Whosoever doeth the will of God the same is My brother and sister and mother," has witness borne to Him through His Spirit in every member of His spiritual family.

To-day we have not far to look for mighty works. True, there are those who point to the evidence that brute force now rules the world. Everything, they say, is at the mercy of high explosives, it is becoming daily harder to believe that the Spirit of Love is Lord

over the earth. Perhaps the belief is hard ; perhaps again it is not meant to be easy. Yet, surely the spiritual pessimists are blind guides after all. The unselfish fellowship of the trenches, the cheerful patience of the hospitals, the still more heroic endurance which supports loss, and uncertainty more terrible than loss itself, without murmur or despair—whence do they all proceed ? Many there are who have a glorious share therein without knowing that it is Christ's Spirit which worketh in them both to will and to do. What of that ? The Gospel tells us of two disciples who in the hour of trial walked with our Lord, and knew not that it was He until the journey's end. Yet He was made known to them ; He will be made known to others ; already He is being made known to our faith. For we believe that His Spirit alone can bring such mighty things to pass in the least of His brethren. The horror and the terror of these days only make plainer the witness that the spirit of self-sacrifice, which is the Spirit of Christ, is still and for ever the strongest force in a world we had almost said to be under

bondage to the Devil. We cannot condemn the generation of God's children through whom in every age His witness is borne.

Before passing on, however, we must at the risk of digression briefly consider from the other end the relation of the witness of the Spirit to the truths of the historic revelation of Christ. Many people would agree that the power of what they would vaguely call the Christian spirit must mean something; they would not deny that, in a general sense, it is evidence of the Presence of God among men, but, they would tell us, You are making an unwarranted assumption in claiming that the conclusions to which the evidence points are the particular beliefs which the Church holds concerning the historic life of Christ. In some sense, certainly, the Spirit bears witness to God; but why should we maintain that it bears witness to the particular belief that God incarnate in the historic Christ lived on earth and died and rose again? May we not believe that the spirit of love and self-sacrifice is somehow the Spirit of God in man, without burdening and encumbering that belief with

doubtful and difficult assertions about the life and death of one man whom we suppose to be God? May we not free the broad doctrine of the Spirit of God from the particular historic associations, which no doubt protected the doctrine in its earlier stages as a husk protects a kernel, but may be discarded now that a fuller growth makes such protection unnecessary and even cramping to fuller development? May not a modern Christianity arise easier for the modern man to accept, because it does not require him to believe controversial and unverifiable assertions about a remote and partially forgotten past? Will not such a religion of immanence free Christianity from its historic husk, which will destroy its life if it fail to burst, now that the fulness of time has come?

Such reasoning is highly plausible, and no doubt attracts many acute and honest minds. To reply that the greatest and most profound operations of the Spirit have been on the whole found in those who have accepted the Church's creed, may be true, but does not in any case quite meet the objection. For those who make it readily admit that in the



past the association of the Spirit's witness with orthodox belief about the historic Person of Christ has been necessary and right ; but, they would say, this association marks an early stage of growth, and the time has come, or is now coming, when a riper development of Christian experience may and must dispense with it.

A more thorough application, however, of Bible teaching to human life will expose the fallacy. In I Cor. xii St. Paul's great rule, "No man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit," is balanced by its converse, "No man speaking in the Spirit of God saith Jesus is anathema." St. John inculcates the same lesson in fuller and more explicit form. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God : every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God : and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God." The more deeply we ponder the circumstances which elicited these warnings, the more we shall



appreciate their abiding value. The early converts to Christianity had no doubt that great spiritual forces were at work among them, yet they found their very variety perplexing. They did not all seem to point clearly in any one direction. Heathenism, too, had its spiritual manifestations ; miraculous cures, wonderful prophecies and visions sometimes seemed to proceed from spirits which did not own the allegiance of Christ. Spiritual manifestations seemed at times to compete and conflict with each other, and in giving rein to all alike the Christian Church did not understand whither it was being led. All seemed to be the fruit of some divine operation, and yet if equal value were attached to all, the total result seemed to be merely the encouragement of eccentricity in practice and of confusion in belief. A test of spirits was needed, beyond and apart from the spiritual or supernatural character of the manifestations themselves. They must be judged by an external standard, a standard based on the content of their message, not on the striking form or abnormal circumstances in which the message was conveyed. That

standard, the Apostles taught, was provided by the revelation of God in the historic life of the man Jesus. If that historic life were the final and unique revelation of the Godhead, then it could be truly said that every spirit which taught or worked after the manner of Christ's teaching and working, and enabled men to follow more closely the blessed steps of His most holy life, must be indeed the Holy Spirit of God. Such spiritual activities include "miraculous" manifestations, but would by no means be confined to them; however strange or however commonplace their form and circumstances, the One Spirit was the source of all. But on the other hand, manifestations, however apparently miraculous, must be attributed to some other agency than the Holy Spirit, if in any degree they led men away from the pattern and standard seen in the life of Christ. Thus the Apostles formulated their great theological test of spirits. Every spirit which acknowledged the Lordship of Jesus was of God, every other spiritual operation was to be repudiated and suppressed.

The outward setting of the problem has

changed to-day, but its essence and its solution remain identical through the ages. We need a test of spirits as sorely as ever did the first converts to our Faith. On every hand, spiritual experience is appealed to—and rightly appealed to—as evidence of the living reality of God. But if we leave spiritual experience to be its own judge and standard, if we value it merely according to the intensity of conviction it inspires, the striking form it takes, or the effectiveness of the results it produces, we too shall merely encourage eccentricity in practice and confusion in belief. Christian science, American Mind-cure, oriental mysticism in its nobler forms, all have an equal claim on the perplexed but eager broad-mindedness of the pathetic searchers after a purely spiritual and non-theological religion. The abyss of confusion which is the goal of their misguided quest may be profitably surveyed, from a safe distance, in James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*. But the Catholic Christian has as his test and standard of all spiritual experience the Catholic Manhood, wherein Emmanuel was once for all revealed. That Life, that Death, that Resur-

rection and Ascension are the outward facts, plain to the most ignorant, inexhaustible to the most learned, by which all spirits are proved, whether indeed they are of God. The test is as catholic in its universality, as it is searching in its rigour. Would that we might prove thereby the spirits of our modern world. "Faith-healing" has the sanction of Him Who cast out the devils of disease, yet if we base our religion on that alone, may we not forget that only through suffering and death does human life pass to its eternal glory? Ascetic mysticism appeals not in vain to the days and nights spent in prayer and fasting, yet if we set it up as the standard of Christian life, shall we not dishonour the publican's house, the Pharisee's table, the country home of Mary and Martha, whereat the Divine Guest did not disdain a welcome? Philanthropy and social reform are spirits which work mightily in our modern world; they may turn to the gospels for their warrant, but dare we trust them, unless they are willing to serve in the work of salvation from sin which named the Son of God? Do the Spirits which move us

in every thought and action confess that Jesus is Lord? If we do not so test them, one of two results will follow. Either we shall be left at the mercy of every cross-current of pious feeling and every shifting wind of specious argument, or, still worse, we shall be led to rely on the *form* of spiritual activity as its only trustworthy credential.

There is some ground for calling the latter error the characteristic heresy of the twentieth century. American culture is its most congenial soil, and the studies of American psychologists have matured its growth. It finds a typical expression in William James' *Varieties* already referred to, a book which has performed very real service in directing the sympathetic attention of science towards religious phenomena. The essential error of this psychological school of thought is to suppose that religious phenomena constitute one department of human experience, differentiated by its form from others, so that the psychologist can estimate the value of religion for human life by making a study of the particular experiences called religious. For a fuller discussion of the value of this

point of view we must refer to Chapter IX, but we may here briefly notice its fundamental assumptions and the result to which they lead. The moment we differentiate religious experience by its form, we shall naturally regard as its characteristic manifestations the mystical visions, raptures or conversion experiences, which come only to certain specially constituted individuals. People of this psychological type will be marked off as those whose experiences are the subject of religious study. It soon becomes obvious to the student that this particular form of experience is associated with the most diverse kinds of theological belief. He is therefore led to honour as the typical and authoritative exponents of religion, Indian Yogi, Mohammedan Sufis, Catholic ascetics and American revivalists, almost everyone in short but the quiet saint of Christianity, who without unusual experiences of any kind strives to live his daily round of work and pleasure to the glory of God. The theological conclusions which the psychological student will then recommend for acceptance (if he does not disparage all) will tend to be what he regards as the highest

common factor in the beliefs of those he studies ; and in order to reach any positive result he will have to exaggerate that highest common factor (which in reality is almost negligible) by the instinctive operation of his own prejudices. But the whole study is barren, just because it has started with the initial mistake of differentiating religious experience by its form. The Christian starts with a theological test of its content, viz., the revelation of God in the historic life of Jesus, and to him therefore all life wherein men approach the likeness of Christ is equally religious experience. He honours as the true exponents of religion not only those whose "experiences" take a striking form, but also the commonplace men and women who strive to follow Christ into the workshops of the world, and cast upon their dusty walls, in sublime unconsciousness, the shadow of His Cross. The theological test instead of narrowing the Christian's outlook, as opponents of dogma would have us believe, enables him to base and verify his religious convictions not only in the special experiences which are the privilege of the few, but in the common life



of normal goodness, which lies within the reach of the most ordinary man. The great affirmation that the whole of a typical human life once for all revealed God to man is not a cramping limitation of faith, but is the charter on which commonplace humanity may base its claim to live in the fullest blessedness of fellowship with God. For the van-boy in the East End of London may have the Spirit of Jesus as truly as those whose visions have filled volumes with psychological technicalities.

The Holy Spirit therefore working among men is the witness and interpreter of Christ, but unless it be the Incarnate, dead and risen, Christ to Whom the Spirit gives His witness and interpretation, we shall be left without power to discriminate where His working is to be found, or to see whither it would lead us. It is a false remedy which tries to escape from bewilderment by seeking a criterion in the form of spiritual experience. To express our conclusion more technically, the historic events of Christ's Incarnate life can alone be *normative* for all spiritual experience and all knowledge of God ; it is this normative



character which constitutes the abiding value of the historic Incarnation in relation to the Spirit's witness.

At this point we shall not unnaturally be accused of arguing in a circle. It is, we say, the Spirit Who witnesses to the truth of our faith in Christ, yet we must believe in Christ before we can appreciate and recognise the witness of the Spirit. In a formal sense the charge is quite justified, yet we need not shrink from admitting it. For in real life, as distinct from the formal logic of the older text-books, the normal process by which truth is reached and established can almost always be represented as involving in the same sense a circular argument. The scientific discoverer invents a hypothesis to cover and explain certain facts which come within his experience. He then verifies the hypothesis by applying it to a wider and ever-increasing range of new facts, until the original hypothesis, if it be found really applicable, becomes established as true. But in order so to verify the hypothesis, he must first, provisionally at least, believe it, for this belief determines the further facts

which he selects for attention and the whole attitude of mind and expectation with which he regards them. The new facts verify and interpret the hypothesis, yet apart from the hypothesis he cannot select or estimate the whole bearing of the facts. Now our beliefs about the historic life of Jesus come to us as much more than the mere hypotheses which men frame to meet specific problems ; they come to us as human expressions of the final self-revelation of the Eternal God. The works of the Spirit, again, are much more than mere natural facts which support or reject a human theory ; they mean nothing unless they are the continued manifestation of the same Divine Life which Christ revealed. But with these precautions against misunderstanding we may truly assert that our beliefs about Jesus bear precisely the same logical relation to the witnessing operations of the Spirit, as a scientific hypothesis bears to the continuous succession of facts in which it is verified and established. The proper conclusion from the mutual inter-dependence of our belief about Jesus and our belief about the Holy Spirit is not that both beliefs are

invalid, but that the entire Christian revelation forms a complete and indivisible whole, the parts of which cannot be understood in isolation from each other. The revelation of God in the historic life of Christ is in a true sense final and incapable of change, though heaven and earth may pass away ; yet it is not in itself sufficient to guide us into all the truth ; it is not, in the logical sense, wholly self-supporting. It needs to be verified and interpreted in every act and thought which Christian faith and hope and love can make ours. And, on the other hand, those thoughts and acts in all their endless variety of form and context lose their significance and fail of their full effect, unless they are themselves viewed and understood as springing from the One Spirit Whom the ascended Christ sent down to be His Witness among men. To disparage the need of the Spirit's witness is to substitute a dry and barren dogmatism about the past for an eager search into the living realities of the present. To disparage the historic truths to which the Spirit witnesses is to lose oneself in a maze of bewildering experience for lack of the clue which the

historic Incarnation alone provides. To listen once to the full harmony of the Christian Gospel would be to understand the mystery of that faith, which is sure of the past, yet learns in the present, and therefore looks forward to the future with the steadfast gaze of eternal hope.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS SANCTIFIER—(A) SANCTIFICATION AND ETHICS

THERE is another point of view from which the whole operation of the Holy Spirit may be regarded. His works are not only works of witness, but also works of sanctification. By sanctification we mean essentially the setting apart and the adaptation of something to be the dwelling place of God's Presence and the instrument for His use. The work of the Spirit is to hallow human instruments and vessels for God's service. As therefore the work of witness is naturally connected in our minds with the Incarnation, since it is that wherein God's revelation through Christ is interpreted and fulfilled; so the work of sanctification is connected with the Atonement, since it is that wherein God's

redemption through Christ is continued and completed. The two aspects of the Spirit's operation thus correspond to the two aspects of the Person of our Lord.

The Atonement, as we saw, achieves the forgiveness, or, in St. Paul's language, the justification, of every man whose faith accepts the gift. The Atonement makes possible for the sinner a fresh start on the road to heaven, and the Christian life on earth must start and restart continually from the forgiveness or justification of God. But for ultimate attainment of the goal, something more than a start or series of starts is required. There must be also progress. It is this actual growth of the entire man towards perfection which the word "sanctification" denotes. The development is throughout the work of the same God Who wrought the original forgiveness which enabled the process to begin.

Looking therefore at the twofold operation of the Spirit from the human side, it is in a sense true to say that while the operation of witness has its fruit in Christian faith, the operation of sanctification has its fruit

in Christian action. At the same time St. Paul's whole doctrine of justification by faith issuing in sanctification, is a protest against the error of understanding the term "action" in any narrow sense. Faith is the initial assent of our whole personality, whereby we recognise and reach towards God in Christ as the goal and guide of our whole personal activity, and accept Christ's atoning death as restoring our means of access to God in Him. This faith is wrought through the witness of the Spirit to Christ's revelation. It is moved thereby to accept His message of redemption, and it must issue in the process of sanctification, wherein we progress in the Power of the Spirit towards the actual attainment of the end which faith has made ours. It will follow therefore that the action in which we are sanctified, is not a mere matter of outward acts or "works" alone. We do not become better Christians or make actual progress towards the attainment of the Christian ideal simply by doing outward acts. We become better Christians in so far as our whole personalities, mind, heart and body are consecrated and used in the service

of Christ. This process of sanctification is shown as much in thoughts and feelings as in outward acts. Holy thoughts, holy desires, holy feelings, holy acts are alike parts of the whole action of life in which we are sanctified. They all spring from the faith which starts and directs them towards their end. The whole action of Christian life which they constitute is the process, whether inward or outward, which faith sets in motion. Christian works or outward acts only have meaning and value as parts of the wider process in which the whole man is sanctified. Faith is the earnest that the process will one day achieve its end, and God accepts this earnest, justifies us, treats us already as His children, and gives us His Spirit to bring the process of our growth to fulfilment. The sanctification of the Spirit therefore works the whole actual progress in holiness which the faith wrought by His witness initiates. At the same time the faith wrought by the Spirit's witness may be regarded as the first step in sanctification, and the process of sanctification as it advances will in its turn become a witness to confirm the faith. Witness and sanctification



are therefore, as we have already said, two aspects rather than two departments of the Spirit's operation, and faith and action two aspects rather than two departments of man's religious life.

The doctrine of sanctification thus enables us to see practical problems of conduct in their true perspective, and provides us with an ethical principle which moral philosophers have often sought in vain. Let us see what light it has to throw on the dark places in the theory of ethics.

The first step in moral philosophy is to assume the existence of a law of action which enjoins certain acts as right and forbids certain others as wrong. The Mosaic commandments are a general type of all such moral laws. But having taken this first step, we are immediately confronted by a difficulty. For reflection shows the impossibility of saying definitely that certain specific outward acts are in themselves always right and others always wrong. We may say in general terms that killing and stealing are wrong actions and almsgiving a right one. These precepts are broadly stated in the Mosaic

Law. But if killing, stealing, and almsgiving denote mere outward acts—*i.e.*, the taking away of life and property and the giving of money to the poor—the former cannot always be forbidden, nor the latter always enjoined. There are multitudes of cases in which the taking of life and property is generally held to be right, and the giving of money to the poor generally held to be wrong. You cannot decide the legitimacy of war by quoting the Sixth Commandment, or the legitimacy of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill by quoting the Eighth, nor can you solve the problems of the Charity Organisation Society merely by affirming the duty and privilege of giving alms. No doubt it is natural and justifiable to save the precepts in question by retorting that where taking of life is legitimate, it is no murder; where taking of property is legitimate, it is not theft; and where the giving of money to the poor is not legitimate, it is no true charity. But then the questions are immediately raised, What is murder? What is theft? What is true charity? And so long as we consider the outward actions only, no answer can be given and no criterion

found. We cannot give any simple rule of outward action which will apply to all cases. We are led to the conclusion that in order to differentiate the legitimate taking of life from murder, the legitimate taking of property from theft, true charity from pauperisation, we have to consider much more than the bare actions themselves. We have to take into account the purpose and motive with which the action is performed, and the result which it is likely to produce. Obviously an act which is simply accidental has no moral significance at all. A man may kill another by accident, but only the most primitive of legal codes will attribute to him the guilt of murder. But apart from the question of accident there are various purposes which the law of states and the conscience of men regard as in greater or less degree justifications for taking life, as, *e.g.*, self-defence, the protection of another, or even the saving of the person killed from a more dreadful fate otherwise inevitable. At least these purposes and motives alter the whole character of the act. Again the moral value of an act is modified not only by its purpose but by its

result, so far as it is foreseeable. Good intentions do not constitute a sufficient excuse for doing actions which the doer of them ought to have recognised as on the whole likely to be harmful in their consequences. The giving of sixpence to a beggar may spring from a charitable motive; it is none the less foolish and wrong, if the result is plainly to harm the man himself and the community by encouraging a class of dishonest professional mendicants.

All codes of law which regulate human action, whether their sanction be secular or religious, recognise for practical purposes considerations of this kind, but it is not within their province or capacity to formulate any theory or general principle as to the difference between right and wrong action in their essential natures. All such codes of law are therefore inadequate to interpret to us the underlying principles which should govern our action as a whole; they point towards such principles in recognising that the moral character of outward acts must depend on considerations outside the acts themselves, but they do not provide the true

standard of discrimination, and their judgments are always of a more or less rough and ready kind.

Ultimately, as we have seen, the rightness or wrongness of any act is determined by the purpose with which it is done and the consequences to which it may reasonably be thought to lead. In other words, the problem of conduct is a problem of adapting the best means to a right end. The doing of a really right action must depend on a right purpose to achieve a good end, and in a wise judgement as to the means to achieve the result. Right conduct thus involves the whole activity of life. The question: How shall we find a principle of discrimination between right action and wrong? leads at once to the further question: What is the whole end or purpose to which the activity of life ought to be directed? It is only when we have reached a clear conception of the ultimate purpose which life is meant to achieve, that we are in a position to adapt and to discriminate the right means for attaining it through outward action.

So far we are following the footsteps of

many moral philosophers, who own no allegiance to the Christian faith. Many of them have made answer that the ultimate end of all action must be, or ought to be, the attainment of happiness, whether the happiness be that of the individual himself or of the community to which he belongs. At first sight this answer seems to provide the criterion of which we are in search. The end of happiness does seem to be capable of including the whole activity of life, and right outward action will be simply part of the means whereby the end is achieved. Those acts will be right which tend on the whole to produce the greatest amount of happiness, those which lead to unhappiness will be wrong. The best supporters of this theory have been much concerned to show that it is not really as selfish as it sounds. They have been eager to insist that only through self-sacrifice can true happiness be won, and certainly no Christian would deny that in God's Presence is joy, and at His right Hand there is pleasure for evermore. But reflection shows that by making mere happiness the end, we have not really found any

criterion capable of discriminating right action from wrong. For the question at once becomes insistent: What kinds of happiness ought we to aim at? It cannot be any kind of happiness, however complete or intense we may suppose it to be. There is a sense in which a sow wallowing in the mire presents one of the most complete pictures of happiness which earth affords. Yet even if such happiness were conceived as everlasting, we could not regard this type of happiness as constituting the supreme end of life. As Mr. F. H. Bradley and others have long ago pointed out, all theories which make mere happiness the end come to shipwreck on this difficulty. In order to retain a high ideal of moral goodness they are compelled to admit a distinction between higher and lower forms of happiness. The distinction is not one of degree or quantity, but of quality and kind. They are forced to take the highest kind of happiness alone as the real goal of human effort. But in so doing they have ceased to make mere happiness the end. In other words, *right* happiness is the happiness to be sought, and the question, What is right? still remains unanswered.



We have failed to find in happiness as the end a real criterion whereby human actions may be judged.

Moreover, there are serious objections to making even a specific form of happiness the universal end of right conduct. As we have seen, a mere law of outward actions expressed in the form "Thou shalt do this" and "Thou shalt not do that," is an inadequate criterion of right and wrong, because the difference between the two does not lie in the outward acts themselves considered apart from their purpose and result. But such a law nevertheless makes a powerful appeal to the conscience, precisely because it enjoins the doing of right from no ulterior motive whatsoever. We cannot but recognise the moral force of a purely disinterested desire to do right simply because it is right. "Because right is right to follow right were wisdom in the scorn of consequence." And if we make any form of happiness the supreme end of action this appeal seems to be dangerously weakened. True, the highest act of self-sacrifice may or must in the end lead to the noblest happiness, but it loses its



moral meaning and value if it be done *for that reason*. If any form of happiness be itself the end aimed at, then the purpose of the action loses its disinterested character, and its moral value is impaired. No form of hedonism or utilitarianism can fairly be made to fit in with the best conscience of mankind.

How then are we to define the universal aim of human action in such a way as to obtain a criterion which will discriminate right from wrong? The aim, as we have seen, must be an aim for the whole personal life. We cannot really isolate outward action or practice as a separate department which can be treated apart from thought and feeling. Action is really all life viewed as the process of an effort towards the attainment of a supreme purpose ; and the claim of utilitarianism to provide a definition of this purpose has been shown to be delusive.

The Christian answers that the end of action is perfect sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, and that it is His sanctifying power which works through all actions rightly directed to that end. In all good human

activity the Holy Spirit is consecrating human life to live in communion with God as the instrument of His use and as the object of His love. Right actions are those which help and subserve the Spirit's work ; wrong actions are those which mar and hinder it.

Let us try to apply this doctrine, first to the general problems which we have raised as to the end and motive of action as a whole, and then to the specific difficulties of Christian conduct in outward act, which are rightly viewed as part of those wider problems.

Clearly in the idea of sanctification we have an end of action which is truly universal. All human activity, whether of thought, feeling, desire, or bodily act, can be conceived as playing its part in attaining the sanctification of the whole. For in all these forms of activity the striving after perfection may be present, and perfection is to be perfectly consecrated in the service of God. At the same time the idea of sanctification as the end enables us to find an answer to objections fatal to those theories which seek to put happiness in that position. Sanctification provides us with a definite purpose which

lies beyond all particular acts, and in so doing presents a real standard whereby they may be judged and discriminated as good and evil, right and wrong. If we know in Christ the character and purpose of God, we are able to say that this act is right, inasmuch as it brings us nearer to consecration in His service, and that act wrong, because it hinders and spoils that consecration. Yet in providing an external standard for action, the idea of sanctification saves us nevertheless from the suspicion that we are making right action depend on purposes which are ulterior or interested in any bad sense. We are enabled to clear ourselves from any such imputation, because the conception of sanctification as the end places the final object and the inspiring cause of all action outside and beyond the mere human person who acts. Sanctification essentially means being made meet for the use and the presence of a Good Being who is other than that which is sanctified. And if the character of that Being be pure righteousness and love, no act which truly aims at consecration to Him can be tainted with any breath of self-interest. For self-

interest is the one quality above all others which the sanctifying influence of God's righteous and loving will must destroy. Again, our consecration to such a Being will and must include both the doing of right for right's sake and the joy of being indwelt by love. Both are taken up and harmonised in the idea of sanctification. For if God Who sanctifies us be righteous and loving, we cannot do right without becoming the vessel of His love, nor can we love truly without becoming the obedient instrument of His righteous will.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is a great pity that an utterly false theology should seem to receive high sanction in St. Francis Xavier's well-known hymn, "My God, I love Thee, not because I hope for heaven thereby, nor yet because who love Thee not are lost eternally." Heaven for the Christian cannot possibly mean anything but the full communion of the love of God. To love God in any degree is so far to desire heaven. To love God without hoping for heaven must therefore be nonsense, for heaven is simply the fulfilment of God's loving purpose for His children. To suppose that God's purpose for them that love Him could conceivably be anything else than to bring them to the joy of that heaven, would be simply to deny God's own love—which, in plain terms, is to blaspheme. On the other hand, to desire heaven without desiring to love God in the purest, fullest sense, is to desire a heathen Elysium or Valhalla, which is simply non-existent. The antithesis between "loving God" and "hoping for heaven" is an utterly false one. To suppose that it could have any truth

In the light of this discussion let us turn to the specific problem of outward action in the narrow sense. Our problem is to relate outward acts as particular means towards the great end of the whole personal life. Mere laws of outward action (of which the Mosaic Law is the type) fail because they do not express this relation. But as our Lord taught, the Law is not invalidated but completed and fulfilled when the relation of outward to inward is made clear. Many quite superfluous difficulties have been raised concerning the ethical teaching of the Sermon on the Mount as the guide to Christian conduct. These difficulties are based on the quite obviously false supposition that our Lord was intending to supersede one outward command, *e.g.*, "Do not kill," by another

is to destroy the whole foundation of Christian morality. The hymn referred to can itself be defended by placing strong emphasis on the word "because." It is true that the Christian ought to hope for heaven because he loves God, rather than love God because he hopes for heaven. If we do not put this emphasis on the word "because," we should place the word "heaven" in inverted commas to show that it refers only to the myth of pagan superstition. But the verse in its present form is open to disastrous misunderstanding.

outward command, *e.g.*, "Turn the other cheek" or "Resist not evil." This assumption surely betrays what can only be called a perverse misunderstanding of the whole trend of our Lord's ethical discourses. One has only to study passages like our Lord's summary of the law or His treatment of the Sixth Commandment, in order to understand that the purpose of His teaching is to show that outward acts only have moral value as the expressions of a spiritual attitude. No outward rule of action can be absolute and universal; such rules are only rough indications of what should be the purpose and motive working through the whole activity of life. It is only on this principle that our Lord's whole treatment of Mosaic law becomes intelligible at all. The law, "Thou shalt not kill," only has force as expressing the spiritual truth that it is wrong to hate one's brother. The whole law is included in the saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." If that is so, outward action is only important as a means whereby a spiritual attitude or disposition is embodied. That is why the

whole principle of retributive justice, on which the Mosaic Law was based, is in need of revision. The theory of retribution presupposes that one outward act can be paid for or balanced by another; or, in other words, it is assumed that such acts have in themselves a definite and more or less constant value. It is just this assumption which our Lord shows to be fundamentally untrue. Love rejects the principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," because it refuses to enter into such impossible calculations. If a man smites you on the one cheek, there is in that fact no basis at all for calculating what amount of retribution the act may merit. It all depends on the total circumstances and context of the act, and God alone can know what they are—it is not for man to judge. But the principle of love comes to our rescue and shows us that the reckoning of the retribution merited is not only impossible but irrelevant. As far as any need for retribution goes, the Christian will be quite ready simply to turn the other cheek. But even that act itself is only good as indicating an inward and spiritual purpose of love, and



it by no means follows that the outward act of non-resistance is in all cases the best possible means for achieving that purpose. The whole aim of our Lord's teaching with its paradoxical illustrations is clearly to demonstrate that outward acts are in themselves of quite secondary and derivative importance. Have a right spiritual attitude, think and mean obedience to God and the good of men, and then take the best means in your power to show forth and fulfil your intention. That is what it means to be the child of the Heavenly Father, Who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. In other words, our Lord substitutes the principle of the sanctification of all life from within for the law which imposes from without certain definite prohibitions and injunctions. The doctrine of sanctification merely makes explicit as a theory the whole foundation on which our Lord's teaching rests.

Reflection on the practical bearings of this doctrine makes it clear that, while it allows the freest possible scope for action, it is



nevertheless more exacting in its demands than the most rigorous of legal formulæ. For sanctification embraces the whole man ; no mere act or series of acts, however painfully and assiduously practised, can ever satisfy such a standard. Every act which is truly sanctified by the Spirit must be the outcome of right intention, wise judgement and pure feeling, all directed towards Christ-like life. Nothing less than the consecration of the whole through every smallest part is the demand of the Spirit of God. " Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Yet it will follow at the same time that the highest right in outward action can only be achieved as part of the wider perfection of the whole man. And here we gain the right line of approach to the most vexed problems of modern ethics, of which we may take the legitimacy of fighting as a typical and crucial instance. Those who say that the Christian must be wrong in bearing arms, never really face the argument that we cannot achieve Christian perfection in outward act

apart from Christian perfection in the inward graces of the Spirit. To ask what Jesus Christ Himself would have done if he had been invited to respond to the call to arms which has come to His followers to-day, is to ask a question which is probably in the strict sense unanswerable. But even if the question admitted of a definite and certain reply, that reply would not have the immediate relevance to the problem which many people suppose that it would. It is argued as apparently self-evident that we cannot be sincere Christians unless we do what Christ would have done in similar circumstances. It is forgotten that on the same showing it is equally self-evident that we cannot be sincere Christians unless we think what Christ would have thought, and feel what Christ would have felt, unless, that is, our whole spiritual and mental attainment is on a level with that of Christ's own manhood. This assertion, however, has only to be made explicit in order to appear self-evidently false. Manifestly our attainment in mind and spirit is on an infinitely lower plane than that of the manhood

of our Lord. But we are not therefore insincere in professing ourselves to be Christians, for we do not acquiesce in remaining on that lower plane. We are striving upward to the level of Christ by the sanctifying power of His Spirit, and the attempt cannot be called utterly idle or fraudulent, because the consequences of our imperfections prevent us from rising the whole way at a single bound.

Why should not this reasoning, so obvious in its application to what is inward and spiritual, apply also to outward actions as well? It may be that our Lord, if He had been incarnate to-day, would not have gone forth to the trenches to kill His country's enemies. In that case He would have refrained, because His perfect consecration would have enabled Him to take better and more effectual means of defending the right and casting down the wrong. Perhaps He would not have needed to use force. Perhaps a word or a look from Him would have changed utterly the course of the whole miserable story. We cannot say exactly all the means of action open to a perfect humanity, but obviously its possibilities are very much

greater than ours. The force of this argument has been missed by many, because they commit the error of regarding mere abstention as a form of action, and thus endow a mere negative with a positive force. "Christ," they say, "would have abstained from fighting and so can we; and therefore if we abstain we shall so far be acting like Christ." But the one thing quite certain is that Christ would not *merely* have abstained from fighting. If He abstained, He would have abstained because He had better means of expressing the righteousness of God. And if those means are beyond our reach, we cannot be said to be acting like Christ at all, if our imitation of Him extends no further than not doing what He would not have done. Christ did not tell a sick man to go to a doctor, because He healed him Himself. It does not follow that if we cannot heal a sick man, we shall be imitating Christ by not telling the sick man to go to a doctor. We have to use the best means open to us of achieving what we believe to have been Christ's purpose. The imitation of Christ means a gradual sanctification of our whole

personal life by His Spirit. An imperfect vessel cannot be put to perfect use, but none the less it may be in process of being perfected. To decline to allow the Holy Spirit to perfect His work in us because the consequences of our sin prevent Him from doing so immediately, is the fruit not of humble sincerity, but of petulant pride. Granted that the obligation of the Christian to fight is due to sin, still fighting may be the only way in which his imperfect sanctification can express itself, and by so doing become more perfect. To stand aside is not necessarily the expression of a higher consecration, it may be the rejection of the means by which consecration is to be made more complete. We do not acquiesce in any standard of conduct lower than that of Christ, because we cannot always do exactly what we believe Christ would have done. Through imperfect thoughts, feelings and actions, we press forward to the goal of the highest calling of which humanity is capable. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect." That is the only standard we admit, but we do not approach it more nearly by disdaining to

take the first step, because it is a short one.

The one essential principle to grasp is that the outward act is, considered by itself, of secondary importance ; it has value only as the expression of a spiritual attitude, only as a means taken to achieve an end. The one essential duty to perform is that we should allow the sanctifying spirit to put us to the best use of which we are capable. This way of solving the problem is highly dangerous, but truth is seldom very safe. It leaves much to our own judgement, but the revelation of Christ was not meant to save us the trouble of thinking for ourselves, but to guide and educate the effort of our thought into progressive fruitfulness.<sup>1</sup> Our

<sup>1</sup> The individual man is to some extent safeguarded from the eccentricities of his private judgement by the existence of external authority. It is one function of the official authorities of the Church to represent and to declare the highest conscience of the whole society in matters of conduct, and if we believe that the Holy Spirit is the guide of the society, we must attach the very greatest weight to the authoritative counsel which its representatives give us. Nevertheless no man is entitled to act contrary to his own conscience, and the ultimate responsibility for his conduct must rest with him. Yet in saying this we must be careful what we mean by "conscience." We must not think of conscience as a sort of

powers of action, like our other powers, are talents given us to be used for a purpose. The exact means to be employed is a matter for our own judgement, and since our judgement, however earnestly we pray for the Spirit's guidance, remains the judgement of sinful and fallible humanity, it will often be at fault. But even a hazardous speculation is better than the moral cowardice which buries the talent of action in an obstinate passivity. The judgement of God will not fall hardly on him who faces the ordeal of battle, if thereby he may strike a blow for God's cause, nor again on him who submits to the obloquy of his fellows, believing that Christian duty impels him to give his sacrifice another form than that which the world applauds. Each may in certain cases be wrong,

heaven-sent instinct which enables us to settle off-hand all questions of right and wrong in conduct. This is an error popular in England, because it enables people to plead conscientious motive as an excuse for failure to think out the consequences of their acts. What people call their "conscience" is very often no more than the prejudice produced by the circumstances of their heredity and training. True conscience is the reasoned and reflective moral judgement of the individual, and this conscience must necessarily take account of the authority of the Church as one of its most important data.

but there are worse things in the world than mistakes, the results of which God is well able to overrule for good. The Divine condemnation will fall on those who find in conscience a pretext for avoiding what is unpleasant, and in patriotism a justification for indulging what is uncharitable. It is the inward aim of the spirit which determines the fundamental character of the act, and the supreme aim of all action is to achieve through many doubts and struggles that perfect sanctification which will fit us at last for eternal communion with God in heaven.



NOTE ON THE JUSTIFICATION OF  
THE MEANS BY THE END.

It is perfectly true that the end justifies the means ; for if it be impossible to distinguish outward acts as right and wrong in themselves, it is the end alone which can determine their moral value. If it be ever right to kill a man or to refuse alms to a beggar, then it is the end of the action which must justify it. But the plea that “ the end justifies the means ” commonly disguises the substitution of a lower end for the highest, or a confusion between the true end and what is properly only a means towards it. Thus Jesuits used once to argue that it is justifiable to lie to a man or to torture him in order to bring about his conversion to the Catholic faith. In this case if the end were really true conversion, it would not justify but condemn the means employed. Christ’s Kingdom of truth and love cannot possibly be advanced by such methods. Means of action more like His own can and clearly ought to be chosen by His followers. The

Jesuits confused conversion with reception into outward membership of the Church. Outward membership of the Church is no ultimate end of action at all : it has value only in so far as it is a means to the inner conversion which brings a man into the spiritual fellowship of Christ. This true end is utterly defeated by the means which the Jesuits often permitted themselves and others to employ.

The true doctrine of right conduct as means to an end is clearly illustrated by the parable of the Unjust Steward. The unjust steward had a low end in view, viz., provision for his merely physical livelihood, but he showed admirable wisdom in devising the best means to achieve it. Our Lord laments the fact that the children of light, who have the highest end in view, do not show an equal wisdom in adapting their whole conduct towards achieving it. The unjust steward gave away his master's money, in order to provide himself with the means of subsistence. Will not the Christian use his own money for the good of others, in order to reach the blessedness of communion with God ? The unselfish use of outward things is the only means of reaching eternal

life. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail (*or*, it fails) they may receive you into everlasting tabernacles." The whole parable is a study in Christian utilitarianism. Its moral is derived from the profound paradox that, though men will use the utmost care to achieve the lower purposes of this world, they refuse to take the trouble to think out and carry out the means whereby alone they may reach the eternal end of all life.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS SANCTIFIER—(B) SANCTIFICATION AND DEVOTION

So far we have briefly presented the doctrine of sanctification in its relation to ethical theory ; *i.e.*, in its interpretation of and its application to right and wrong conduct. We have seen that when the doctrine is thus applied to ethics, it carries us beyond mere questions of right and wrong conduct into the central idea of the consecration of the whole personality ; but this consecration itself needs further definition in regard to the manner of its operation in human life. The consecration of life is a fine phrase, but what in practice does it really mean, and how is it brought about ? We cannot afford to leave our answer vague, for the nemesis of such vagueness in theory will be laxity in practice.

As a starting-point for this further enquiry, it will be convenient to take another antithesis commonly employed in ordinary speech, the antithesis between religious and secular. The problem which this antithesis presents is fundamental to the whole nature of human religion. It confronts us with its perplexity whenever we try to think out the relation of religion to life, and infinite confusion arises in religious discussion from the failure to make this problem explicit to the mind.

From one point of view religion, if it be worthy of the name, must cover the whole field of human activity—religious and secular alike. Whatever is right to be done is done equally in accordance with God's will and by His help; every thought which is true, every feeling which is good, bring us further into knowledge of and communion with God, Who inspires and manifests Himself in all. From this point of view every right action is a religious duty, every good experience a communion with the Divine, every place a temple where God's Presence dwells, every time a holy day when His Name may be hallowed and His praise set forth. And at

this level of thought the distinction between religious and secular becomes so elusive as to be in danger of disappearance, for religion is seen to be not one department of life, but the whole regarded in its deepest significance; *i.e.*, in relation to God Who is its source and goal.

Yet it is clear that in popular, and usually also in scientific language, religion bears what is *prima facie* a different meaning. The psychologist when he speaks of "religious experience" means not all experience regarded from the most searching point of view, but a specific kind of experience, wherein the human consciousness is centred upon God as distinct from the other objects which from time to time occupy the foreground of its attention. Similarly, in speaking of "religious" duties and obligations, we commonly mean those specific acts of public and private prayer and worship, which make up our devotions, as distinct from the other activities of ordinary life. Again, though every place and time belong to God and may manifest His presence, yet when we speak of "God's house" and "the Lord's

day " we usually mean a special house and a special day set apart from others for His worship. Finally, the phrase " the religious life " is often used both popularly and as an ecclesiastical term to denote not the whole life of every man in relation to his Creator, but the specifically devotional life which is the particular vocation of certain persons, priests, monks, nuns, and the like. In the sense in which we are now using the word " religion " and its kindred terms, the distinction between religious and secular is quite clearly and sharply drawn. For religion now denotes a special department of life, and the term " religious " is applied to those activities and things which are specially connected with this department, while everything which falls outside it is called " secular."

What is the real relation to one another of these two apparently conflicting senses in which the words " religion " and " religious " may be used ? Surely any true study of religion must take account of both and assign to each some validity and value. Yet the problem of their combination is at once more

pressing and more difficult than is usually perceived.

*Prima facie*, having thus stated the problem, we should probably be inclined to say that the first and widest meaning of religion is really the only true one. If we believe that God is Almighty, All-good and Omnipresent, He must be everywhere and at all times working through all good life and manifesting Himself to all true perception. All action must be religious. Everything must be done for God and by His help. Again, He must be the source and ground not of part of our experience only, but of the whole, in so far as it is good. He must reveal Himself through all His creatures, and all knowledge must in the end be religious. But on reaching this point we are confronted by the question, In what sense then do acts of devotion, of prayer, worship and meditation, bring us into a connection with God which we cannot possess at other times and by other means? Do we really believe that in church or on Sunday we are more truly in God's Presence than we are at dinner or on week-days? Do we believe that a good priest is necessarily a



better Christian, living in closer communion with God, than a good policeman or a good politician ?

If he is honest with himself, the man in the street will probably answer Yes. He does believe that at times and in places of devotion we are meant to come into God's Presence to a degree impossible elsewhen and elsewhere. He does believe that to spend an abnormal amount of time in religious exercises is a necessary mark of a very religious man. In short, he does, broadly speaking, maintain that distinction between religious and secular, which confines religion to one department of life, possessing like other departments its professional men. And in this view, as we have said, the man in the street is supported by the man of science. To the latter, religious phenomena are not all phenomena but those only which are connected with our devotional activities, necessarily only a fraction of our life. To the psychologist, as to the ordinary man, the assumption is quite obvious, that if you want to know the nature and meaning of religion at all, you must study it in those persons who by the

special cultivation of devotional faculties have made themselves experts in that particular department. They are the religious people, and by them religion must be judged.

Yet we must ask whither this seeming truism will lead us, if we press to its logical issue the principle which it involves. If it be really true that it is impossible to be religious in a pre-eminent degree without pre-eminent gifts and opportunities for devotional exercise, then it is impossible for the ordinary man occupied in secular business to be as really godly as one who is leading the "religious" life. Once this conclusion is admitted, we are forced towards the disastrous consequence that the higher grades of religious achievement must of necessity be confined to the few, and those few not those simply who make special efforts after goodness, but those who have rare qualifications for cultivating excellence in a particular direction. The universal church is thus divided by class-distinctions of spiritual privilege; it is the highest class alone who have the opportunity to come nearest to God and the right to speak with authority on all that appertains

to His service. The universal appeal of the Gospel is weakened, the spiritual democracy which the religion of Christ seemed to offer is impaired. No longer can His Church claim to instruct every man in all wisdom, that it may present every man perfect. To strive after perfection will be the task of the selected few, the main body must be content with a lower standard of obligation and achievement.

Surely this conclusion is one to be resisted. Yet if we resist, what meaning and value are we to attribute to that whole side of life which we call devotional and religious in the narrow sense? Does it not by its very nature bring us closer to God than any other part of our life? On what other ground can we urge those duties of prayer, worship and meditation, for the practice of which such constant and powerful exhortation is needed, if they are not to fall into neglect? If we say that all duties are equally religious, that all good life brings us equally into communion with God, shall we not weaken the call to prayer and discourage reverence for holy things?

The whole perplexing problem must be faced squarely, if we are to direct according to knowledge the spiritual progress of our lives towards their heavenly goal. In the public pulpit, and still more at devotional gatherings of the faithful, our spiritual directors habitually urge the duties of prayer and meditation, on the ground that in them *par excellence* we hold communion with God. In so doing they very generally suggest, as a natural consequence, that the more progress we make in religious life, the more time we shall be able to spend in devotional activities. They are, however, nearly always content to ignore the final inference which their teaching seems to imply, viz., that since it is clearly impossible to hold too close or too constant communion with God, ideally speaking, our whole time should be spent on devotion. Is this true? If so, busy men and women seem of necessity to be relegated to the second or third class of spiritual attainment.

The whole difficulty, once clearly defined, may be overcome by closer reflection on the meaning and nature of sanctification, which

as we have seen, is for Christian faith at once the end and the process of spiritual growth. From a very primitive period of religious thought a thing sanctified, devoted or holy, denotes a part of a whole separated from the rest that it may be given to God. But the whole significance of this solemn setting apart is derived from the fact that what is so sanctified and devoted, though outwardly it is a part, is separated not merely as one part among others, but as representative of the whole. Consider such a quite primitive ceremony as the offering of the first-fruits of the harvest. Outwardly, the first-fruits are but a small fraction of the total. But if the significance of the offering were that this fraction only belonged to God, the whole ceremony would lose its essential character and purpose. For its meaning lies in the implied recognition that the whole harvest, being God's gift, belongs to Him, and the part dedicated to Him represents the fact that all is His. The whole proceeding is the expression of a truth which lies too deep even for symbolism, and yet must find some such outward embodiment,

lest by reason of its very universality it be forgotten. If none of the harvest were set apart for God, men would forget the Giver of it all and the spiritual sacrifice to which and by which He trains His children. If all were set apart, the gift would fail utterly of the kindly purpose for which God gave it. The only way whereby men can remind themselves of the fact that the harvest is God's and must be used in His service, and yet that the harvest is theirs, because God has given it to them, is found in setting apart a definite proportion to dedicate and give up to God, in order that the whole may be accepted as from Him. Here lies an essential meaning of all ceremonial sacrifice. Such sacrifice becomes superstitious precisely in so far as the part sacrificed is regarded as a part *merely*—that is to say, as a part grudgingly given up lest God should take the rest as well, rather than as a representative part joyfully dedicated, that thereby it may be recognised that God has given the whole to be used in His service.

This simple reflection on the meaning of primitive sacrifice really provides us with a

principle which not only solves our present problem but interprets the whole working of sanctification in human life. Let us for convenience call it the principle of representative dedication. It has only to be made explicit in order to be given a far wider range of application than is usually recognised as belonging to it. To start with the outward observances of modern religion: Sundays and churches, for instance, in their true significance are obviously fractions of time and space set apart for God, not as fractions merely, but as representing the truth that all time and all space are God's, permeated by His immanence, to be used in His service with that spirit of sacrifice which shall train us to more perfect sanctification. That is the motive which underlies all healthy observance of Sunday, and of all special times and places of worship. It is not that on Sunday or in church we are necessarily, or ought to be, any nearer to God than at other times or in other places. The whole purpose of a Sunday and of a church lies in the fact that each represents what is beyond itself, that each brings out a meaning which belongs



to every time and place, a meaning which we should miss did we not give up specially to God a fraction, whereby we may become conscious of His relation to the whole.

In this application to outward observance the principle of representative dedication is in effect very generally accepted by religious people. But it must be capable of a wider scope if it is really to solve our main problem, and here we shall enter on regions where controversy is much more possible and legitimate. Ought not the principle to be applied not merely to outward things but also to the spiritual activities of our very life itself? Prayer, worship, meditation, the devotional activity of our life, wherein we stir and educate our consciousness of God's Presence and of our communion with Him, do not really form merely one department of our life alongside other departments which possess an equal or proportionate claim upon our attention and endeavour; nor again is devotion one department which ought simply to swallow up and destroy the rest, like the lean kine of Pharaoh's dream. True, the devotional side of our life is a part of it,



but we need no longer have any hesitation in admitting that it is and ought to remain so, so long as we recognise that it is not, properly speaking, merely a component, but a representative part of the whole. Our life comprises many and various activities of which prayer and the kindred activities of worship and meditation seem to form but one. The more, however, we reflect on the nature of prayer, the less able we find ourselves to confine its essence within the narrow limits of our conscious devotions.

Let us first take for consideration that form of prayer which in practice is perhaps the easiest and most natural of all, and yet in theory presents the most perplexing difficulties, viz., intercession for others. The form of prayer which finds expression in intercessory petitions has recently suffered somewhat severe damage from the explanations of those who try to encourage it. In protest against the pagan view which regards intercession as an attempt to conciliate the Divine favour for a particular purpose, some of our modern teachers have suggested doctrines different indeed but scarcely more

satisfactory. Some, caught by the glamour of a rational and scientific explanation, seem almost to imply that the effort expended in such prayer works its result almost with the efficacy of a mechanical force. Prayer, they would say, is work, and, as in other work, the effect or "answer" produced will vary in proportion to the amount of labour expended. Even apart, however, from the neglect of the personal activity of God, which it at least makes possible, this theory seems to imply the dangerous conclusion that the more time we spend on our intercessions, the more effective they will be. The cruel and disastrous nature of such a doctrine would at once become apparent, if anyone were foolish enough to act upon it. Others, on the other hand, react from the pagan view in an opposite direction. They insist that the whole purpose of prayer must be to bring our will into harmony with the Divine. Even in intercession this should be our aim rather than to ask for particular benefits, since it is the will of our Father to give us all that is good. Asking for things, they suggest, is a primitive and barbarous

form of prayer, which will disappear in the light of higher education in the things of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Both views are surely in error through neglecting the simple fact that true intercession must spring from a constant love for and desire to help the person for whom intercession is made. This love and desire is itself a potential activity, and, if opportunity arises, it will issue in various forms of action besides the activity of prayer. The love and desire to help which issue in prayer will also issue, if they be genuine, in any form of external assistance we can render to bring about the result for which we pray. This whole activity of help, whether it issue only in prayer, or in prayer and outward act as well, must be dedicated to God, and can only be effective as fulfilling His will. The significance and value of the particular activity of intercession now become obvious. It is simply a representative dedication to God of the total help which we give or desire

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harold Anson's essay, "Prayer as Understanding," in *Concerning Prayer* (Macmillan, 1916), betrays a strong tendency in this direction.

to give, constantly and in varying forms, to the person for whom we intercede. My petition for my friend rings false unless it means that I am giving or ready to give at cost to myself all the actual help I possibly can or could towards bringing about under God the fulfilment of my petition. If my petition rings true, it is the representative recognition that all the help I myself give or desire to give to my friend needs, if it is to be real help, to be consecrated in the service of God. My petition is simply an attempt to put my own feeble efforts of action and desire, frustrated as they are by the barriers of human and mortal limitation, into the hands of Him Who is surely able by their means to bring about the fulfilment after which they strive.

This view of intercession at least enables us to harmonise it with a consistent theory of the whole devotional side of our life; while at the same time we preserve the value of the simplest request which the Christian child is taught to present to his Heavenly Father. Our theory leads us up to those wide interpretations of the nature of prayer

whereby religious thinkers ancient and modern have extended its range far beyond those times in which we consciously set ourselves to pray. “*Laborare est orare*,” says the stern old monastic motto. The romantic poet strikes a different note :

He prayeth best who loveth best  
 All things both great and small,  
 For the dear God Who loveth us  
 He made and loveth all.

Both are profoundly right, for prayer represents the dedication of all human activity to God. It is the special part cut off, as it were, from our total activity in order that therein the dedication of the whole may be made self-conscious and thereby more complete. The truest prayer is prayer from the heart—prayer, that is, in which the effort of the whole personal life is concentrated. But the whole life is not confined to mere devotional exercise ; that exercise takes its whole content and character from that which lies beyond itself.

It will follow that the secular activities of our life will constitute the very substance

and matter of what we offer in our prayer. Without such special devotion, we should miss the deepest meaning of all life—namely, its sanctification to the service of God, which the Spirit within is bringing about. But, on the other hand, if it were conceivable that in our life there should be nothing but devotion, we should be in God's Presence empty-handed without those most precious gifts of work and enjoyment, thought and desire, which He had intended us to bring. The devotional part of our life is a part wherein the whole should dwell. If any fraction of our life cannot dwell there, if a man cannot without irreverence remember in his prayers the most careless moment of his day, then his sanctification is incomplete, and that which jars upon his devotion should be cast out of his life. But at the same time it must surely be true that God is glorified by all richness of variety in the thoughts, desires and actions which we are able to dedicate to Him in prayer. Just as there is abundant variety in the first-fruits of a bountiful in-gathering of what the earth brings forth for man, so the first-fruits of man's own

life which he brings to God in a quiet hour are only enriched by the manifold occupations, efforts and experiences whereof the harvest is composed.

If all were as it should be, the representation of our whole activity in our devotions would be a perfectly true one ; our prayers would be the perfect mirror of our lives. In that case it would be quite false to say that in our devotions we were nearer God than in our other activities ; our prayers would only be the occasion for us to realise the holiness of all, and to dedicate them afresh. But in point of present fact we have not yet reached this ideal, for our whole lives are tainted by the guilt of sin. True, sin enters our devotions as well as the rest of our lives. Nevertheless it will on the whole be found that the hours which we set apart for the consciousness of our communion with God will, generally speaking, be those also whereby our progress in sanctification is chiefly advanced. For it will be then chiefly that we shall realise the full horror of sin, and make resolve by God's help to deliver ourselves and others from its bondage. In this sense it will be

true that our prayers bring us nearer to God than the rest of our lives. But if this is so, we must recognise that our prayers cease truly to be representative of our lives, and we shall endeavour to remove the discrepancy by raising our other activities to the level of our prayers. We shall use the prayer of Keble's hymn :

Help us this and every day  
To live more nearly as we pray.

But still it must not be forgotten that the devotional side of life will lose its whole purpose and meaning if the secular be excluded from it or held to be necessarily on a lower plane. It is the Holy Spirit's purpose to bring about the sanctification of the whole. In His divine wisdom He begins with the representative part, and works through that upon the rest.

Our discussion is proceeding outwards in widening circles, and we have still to give the principle of representative dedication a more extended range. Human religion is not to be studied as the life of individuals only; it is also the life of a society, of a



Catholic Church. And the work of the Spirit is not to sanctify individuals merely, but also to sanctify the whole society of faithful people, the mystical Body of Christ. Thus then we approach the answer to a question we have so far left on one side: Are those who are called to the "religious" life in the technical sense, if they respond worthily to that calling, necessarily better or holier or nearer to God than those who try to do their Christian duty in a secular avocation? Our answer must be that these "religious" persons stand to the whole society in the same relation as that of the devotional activity of the individual to his whole personal life. They are a part of the society dedicated to God in a special sense, only that through them the dedication of the whole may be represented. Ideally speaking, therefore, "religious" persons are not any holier, any more godly, than those who live "in the world." In them as a representative part the holiness permeating every part of the society is expressed and made as it were self-conscious. Thus the specially religious callings and offices would lose their whole

significance if there were no others beside them in the society. Their whole *raison d'être* is found in what lies, in a sense, outside them. It is only as a member of a society which contains policemen and politicians as holy as himself that the priest has any right at all to his special title of holiness.

We must, however, again distinguish the ideal point of view from that which regards the present imperfection of our growth in holiness. The conception of a really sanctified Church is still only an ideal. In point of present fact, the Church is still struggling towards it, stumbling at every step through her sins and shortcomings. While this condition lasts, it seems to be the Holy Spirit's plan to draw the whole society upward through selected individuals, and, in spite of exceptions, it seems to be part also of that plan that these selected individuals should, as a general rule, be those also who are called to a specially religious office, since these receive a special grace for the instruction and guidance of others. In this sense it may be true that, as a general rule, priests are holier than laymen. But in so far as this is the case,

the priest's office fails of its ideal representative function, and that failure should only stir penitence in priest and layman alike. There can be no false clericalism, no spiritual class-distinctions in the Church, if only its members would understand what is so often said and sometimes so little remembered, that if any man, priest or layman, has at all by God's grace been brought nearer to God than his fellows, it is not for his own sake, but for the sake of the more perfect sanctification of others.

What light, then, has our discussion thrown on the distinction between religious and secular and upon the whole method of the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification, which that distinction implies? Ideally speaking, the antithesis between religious and secular does not denote any distinction between different kinds of things, but only a distinction between the points of view from which we regard and think of them. The religious meaning of all things is the profound and universal meaning, the secular is the superficial and particular. But the human mind is limited, it can only think of one thing at a time.

And for that reason the deep, constant, universal significance of reality, which underlies the whole, always tends to disappear beneath the distracting, changeful, elusive particulars which play upon its surface. That deep significance will be lost to us altogether, unless we set apart special times, special places, special efforts, special persons, so that through them we may of set purpose take account of it. The religious department of life represents the meaning and purpose of the whole, which are found only in the perfect consecration of every part to the service and the love of God.

On an ideal earth, that would be a sufficient account of the distinction between the religious and the secular. But the earth is not yet ideal, the sanctification of all life is marred by human sin. In these circumstances the religious part of life and experience naturally stands, in spite of its imperfections, on a higher level than the rest, but it only does so that it may draw the rest upwards. Thus on a sinful earth in a state of change and growth, the distinction between religious and secular does to some extent represent

a difference between the more and the less holy, and the sanctification of the Spirit works through the religious upon the secular.

In Heaven, on the other hand, in an eternal experience we may conjecture that the distinction between the religious and the secular would be altogether merged. In that state the need for the representation of the whole through a particular part would no longer exist. Our devotion would penetrate every particle of our experience, we should always be conscious that our whole life was lived in God and unto God, and yet we should not lose the fellowship with one another, or the goodness and value of particular experiences, wherein the love of God is fulfilled.

In conclusion, let us take our principle of representative dedication to the highest test of all. The Incarnate Christ appeared on earth as one man among many. Yet His Manhood was perfectly sanctified and offered to God not as an individual manhood only, but as representative of all men. Christ, in the Pauline phrase, is the first-fruits of redeemed humanity. We have seen that the term "religion" is used with a double

significance, a narrower and a wider. And this complication is explained and justified by the fact that in this world of fleshly limitation that which really includes the whole of life has to be represented through what appears as a special part. The times and places set apart for worship, the devotional life of the individual, the priestly function of the appointed officer of the society, are essentially such parts representative of a whole, and it is from this fact that they derive a double meaning and application, as referring both to the whole represented and to the part which represents. In an analogous sense the Manhood of Christ is revealed in a narrower outward form, which represents its true universality. Ultimately, all good manhood is included in Christ's : it is all His. The work of the Spirit is to transform our manhood into unity with Christ's, until we altogether come unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of His fulness. Yet if that perfect Manhood, eternally present everywhere in all good human life, is to appear to our earth-limited vision, it must appear as a part of manhood—*i.e.*, as one man

among others, as an individual, yet as One who in the deepest sense is more than part and more than individual, because He is the Representative of all. Such exactly is the orthodox doctrine of Christ's Manhood, wonderfully in accord with our highest experience, divinely adapted to our deepest need. On earth Christ appeared as an individual man, Who died, rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, giving us an example that we should follow in His steps. And the further we follow the more we find that the simple life of the prophet-peasant of Galilee stretches itself to include all the highest activities of which our varied, complicated nature is capable. In the consummation of Heaven Christ is still one Man, but not *a* man, one among others, for His Manhood is found and fulfilled in all His redeemed whom it sanctifies. Our prayers, we saw, are not holier than our other activities ought to be, for in so far as these are what they ought to be, they are summed up in prayer. A priest is not holier than a layman ought to be, for in so far as a layman is what he ought to be, he is included in the priesthood. So



Christ's Manhood is no holier than ours ought to be, for in so far as ours is what it ought to be, it is summed up and included in Christ's. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, and that mediation belongs not only to prayer in the narrow sense, but also to prayer in the wide sense—that is, all human activity dedicated to God. It is all offered through Christ, Who was offered as the first-fruits of humanity, that He might represent the whole.

So far we speak ideally. What of our present sin-distracted life? Our manhood is not yet in Christ's. But the Spirit who proceeds from our Representative is gradually consecrating us for that union. In Christ's Manhood humanity has redeemed itself, and if man's faith will but accept that His inestimable benefit, and try to respond to its exacting claim, the Spirit of the Representative is already working the sanctification of those whom He represents. If the first-fruit is holy, so is the lump. For our sakes our Lord has sanctified Himself.



## EPILOGUE

WE have fulfilled our task of taking in order the main Catholic doctrines about the Being of God and of giving some sketch of their meaning in relation to modern perplexities of thought. To many readers, however, the fruits of the argument will probably seem somewhat artificial and unsatisfying. In the present religious situation, to be discussing the niceties of theological correctness will seem to them like fiddling the tunes of academic theory, while the structure of the Church is being consumed in the flames of much more practical disputes. In the slightly different metaphor of the old tragedian—

*οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ  
θρηνεῖν ἐπὶ ὧδας πρὸς τομῶντι πῆματι.*

To most people “the sore that craves the knife” is, so far as the intellectual side of Christianity is concerned, the problem of historical criticism, and they will refuse to hear the voice of any charmer, who, as

they think, is afraid to probe it boldly, and to treat it drastically.

The foregoing chapters, however, will have failed of their purpose if they have not made it clear that, in the judgement of the present writer, it is in reality the theological rather than the historic problem which is the more urgently pressing. And it may be well to illustrate this contention by a few words in conclusion about one burning controversy and one most sorely needed measure of reform.

The subject known as "clerical veracity" has recently been the occasion for somewhat acrimonious debate, and has even led many honest minds to face seriously the danger or the necessity of a schism. Some of the clergy on the liberal wing have claimed the right to accept certain historic facts, stated or clearly implied in the creeds, in what is known as an allegorical sense. The particular facts most in question are the resurrection of our Lord's physical body from the tomb and His birth of the Virgin Mary. Our present purpose is not to enter into the general merits of the controversy, but merely to urge (partly in criticism of Mr. Streeter, *Restatement and*

*Reunion*, pp. xi., xii., 74, 75) that a settlement of it can only be found in theological considerations, not in those of historical evidence. The truth of this will be at once apparent if those who feel difficulty about these historic facts, on the ground that the historical evidence for them is insufficient, will ask themselves what kind of evidence they would have desired or found satisfactory. Obviously, the mystery of the great central act could hardly have been compatible with the presence of an onlooker at our Lord's bodily resurrection from the tomb, and the fact that the tomb was empty is at least as well supported as anything else in the Gospel-narrative. Again, assuming the Virgin Birth to be a historic fact, it could hardly, for obvious reasons, have been disclosed during the life-time of the Virgin, and until the record of the 3rd Gospel was published, it would be natural and fitting that not more than one or two persons should have known the truth. Granted then that the historical evidence for these facts is inconclusive, we are nevertheless in possession of the strongest evidence we could reasonably and rightly expect on the assumption that the

events actually took place. Of course, this consideration does nothing directly to settle the point at issue ; but it does show that the whole problem lies, not in the sphere of historical criticism at all, but in the sphere of theology. When we examine the full meaning and value of belief in the historic Incarnation, do that meaning and value in any way seem to depend on these two miracles, which our forefathers undoubtedly regarded as necessary parts of the Christian faith ? Does the affirmation of them deepen or protect the mystery of the Divine Love which Christ revealed ? These are the only questions which are of really crucial importance.

If this be so the considerations urged especially in Chapters II. and V. have a very real bearing on the practical problem of assent to the creeds. To deny, or even to suffer accredited teachers to call in question, the Virgin Birth may be seriously to impair the belief in the uniqueness of our Lord's Person as combining two distinct natures. To throw doubt upon the physical resurrection may be to confound the whole distinction between a gospel of resurrection and one of mere immor-

tality. It may be replied that we are making the miracles into theological parables, and that it is precisely because we may so regard them that we need no longer believe in them as historic facts. To argue thus is simply to miss the point of the sacramental metaphysic of Christianity. The same objection would hold with equal force against the whole belief in a historic Incarnation.

But in any case no satisfactory decision can be reached as to the question of assent to the creeds, until the real value of the old credal doctrines has been fully and without prejudice explained and examined. It is the personal opinion of the writer that the results of such examination will be found to weigh far less heavily against the conservative and stricter school of thought than it is fashionable to assume. Meanwhile he is content to bear the reproach that his "orthodoxy" is of a somewhat Fabian kind. Until further and fuller explanations have elucidated the whole problem and enabled a really broad view to be taken of it, an irrevocable step might well prove disastrous. And here at least the much-abused laxity of discipline in our English

Church may display the merits of its defects. By making decisive action so difficult, it may at least secure that decisive action shall not be hasty or ill-considered. There may be, there must be, hope that our Church will clear up and define her theological position : there can be, perhaps there ought to be, no hope that she will do so in a hurry. The fuller definitions, when the time for them has come, will naturally take the form not of any addition to or restatement of the creeds themselves, but of further Articles of Religion determining the sense in which the creeds are to be interpreted.

What, then, is the immediate reform most urgently required ? The provision, surely, of more adequate and comprehensive instruction in theology. And the instruction must begin with those who are to be commissioned to instruct others. If recent events have revealed the ignorance of the laity concerning the essential meaning of the Christian faith, that ignorance only reflects the ignorance of the clergy, whose avowed duty it is to teach. The strategic point of the Church's whole position is the theological college. At present we deem it sufficient to bestow on those who are to be

our accredited expositors of the faith a course of something less than eight months' consecutive training. True, it is assumed that normally those who enter the theological college will already have obtained some academical degree; but there is no guarantee or requirement that it should have any connection with theology. Even the college course itself is by no means devoted mainly to theological instruction. The Bishops' examination contains only one paper on "Creeds and Articles," and the preparation for the whole examination only forms one part of the activity of the college life. The English clergyman is normally expected, or at least required, to be expert in such varied occupations as preaching, pastoral and sick visiting, social work, poor relief, boys' clubs, teaching of children, voice-production and very often book-keeping, besides the care of the devotional life and the cure of souls in the narrow sense, which belong especially to the priestly office. It is perhaps in forming habits of personal piety that our best colleges are chiefly successful. Meanwhile, though the science of dealing with souls in its psychological relations



is almost excluded from the training of ordinands, it is thought desirable to give them during their thirty-two weeks' course a smattering of knowledge on most of the other subjects mentioned, in the forlorn hope of fitting them for their future career. What wonder if the intellectual and theological part of their instruction is reduced to a course of elementary lectures delivered to all the students irrespective of their previous attainments, and diligently copied into note-books in a convenient form which will enable the required portions to be readily reproduced for the satisfaction of the Bishops' examiners ?

Such a travesty of theological education would be ludicrous, were it not so tragic ; and we need look no further than its patent absurdity in order to find abundant explanation of that breach between the Church and modern thought which, if it be left to widen, may soon be beyond repair. It is utterly impossible to obtain any understanding of the nature of the issues involved from a mere set of dictated lecture-notes, or even from the study of a single text-book. Even the student who is not making theology in any sense his special



subject, should be encouraged to read and discuss a certain variety of books written from different standpoints. He will thus appreciate the fact that there is a problem to be faced, and he will gain some general idea of what the Church can say about it.

Our Church of England is proud of the freedom of thought which she permits to her children ; but if they be not taught to use that freedom, they will derive from it a curse and not a blessing. True freedom, as has been pointed out time and again, does not consist in the mere absence of authority, but in the provision of opportunity for the individual to make his proper and unique contribution to the good of all. That opportunity is simply denied to the individual, if he is left without guidance, his powers either not stimulated at all, or allowed to develop without help from the stored wisdom of the Catholic Church. It is not because she permits freedom, but because she interprets freedom in a false and negative sense, that the Church of England is steadily sowing not the virtues but the vices of an elastic system, and is likely to reap a harvest of dissension and, it may be, even of schism as her reward. At the

moment any drastic measure of doctrinal discipline may be impossible or inexpedient, but the problem of religious education presses and need not await the settlement of theological controversy. *Quis docebit docturos?* How shall teachers be taught? Unless the Church sets herself that question and answers it, she cannot hope to reply to the accusations of her critics. While the war checks the supply of ordinands, there is still breathing-space. Must not the opportunity be used?

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